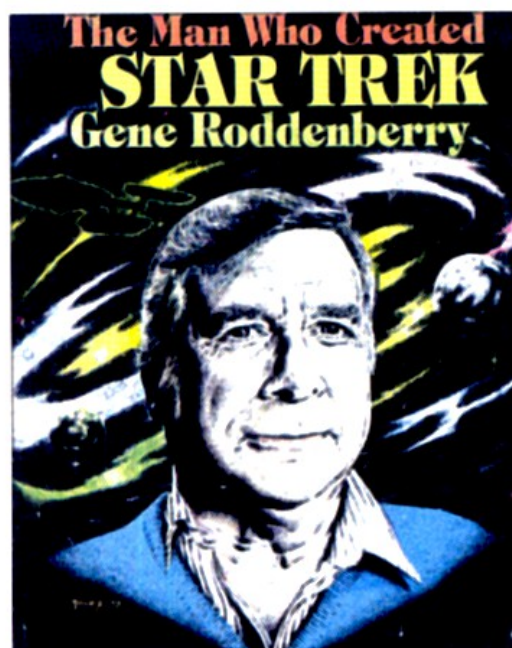
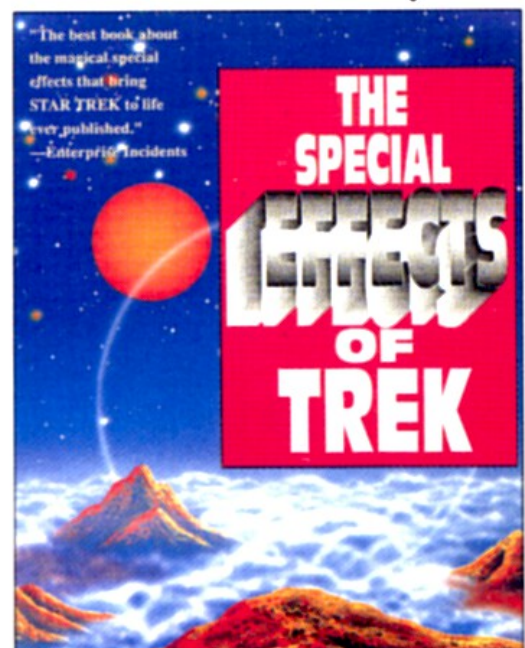




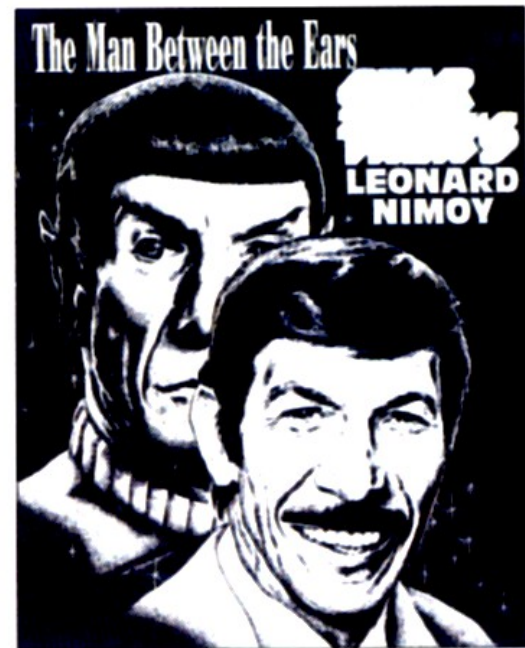
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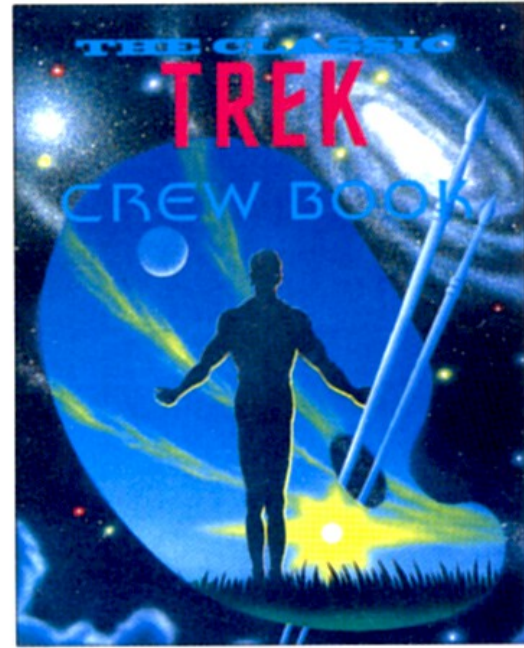
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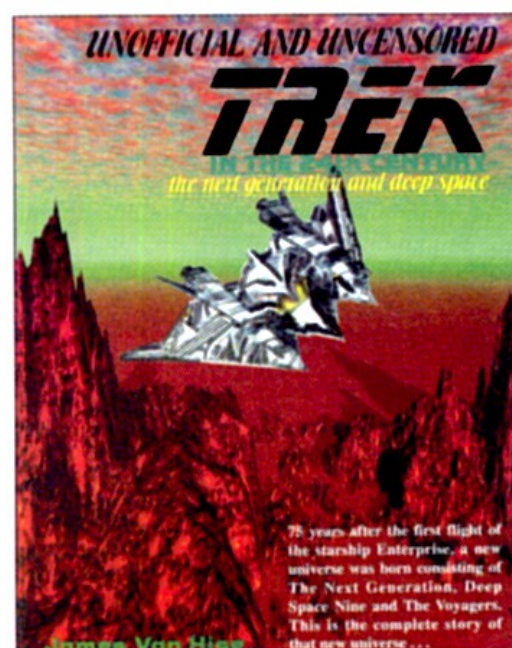
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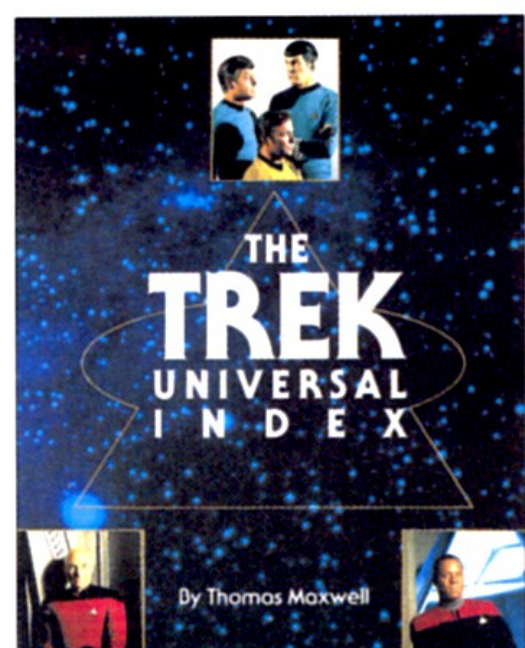
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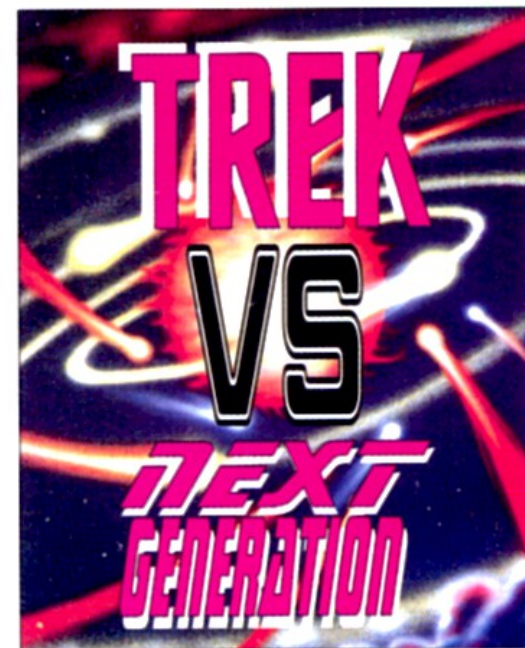
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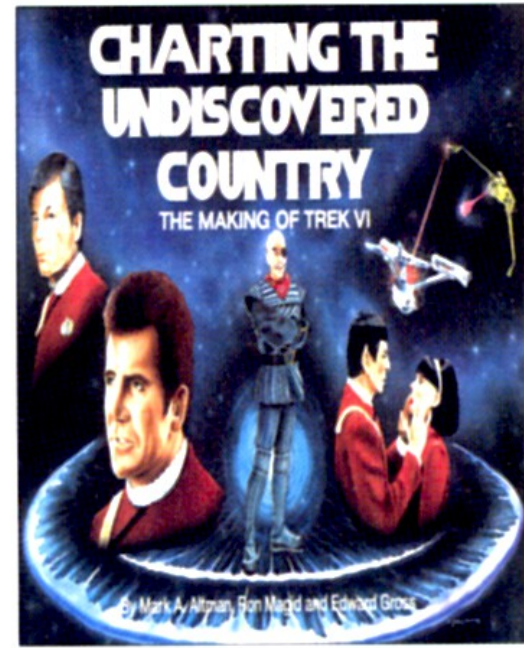
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"The Magazine with a Sense of Wonder"

FEBRUARY 2002

"Kirk is Shatner, and Shatner is Kirk." So the first actor to debut nationwide as captain of the U.S.S. Enterprise told our writer, Sue Uram, when she caught up with him to discuss his non-fiction interview video, MIND MELD (see page 42). He may be more correct than even he knows. In the context of James Tiberius Kirk being a fictional character tooled to present an idealized image of American courage and nobility, and Shatner having honed over the years an on-camera persona that bespeaks gentle authority and self-deprecating wit, one could say that both entities are indeed alike in their ability to fulfill their prime functions.

It is in fact that relaxed, self-deprecating image that makes it hard to truly hate William Shatner. Despite the horror stories that have long been circulated about the man (and for all of his "Who, me?" protestations, the array of witnesses against him is staggering), he has an enviable ability to make his own side of the story sound almost plausible. So what if television functions best as an ensemble medium? He saw himself, Leonard Nimoy, and DeForrest Kelley as the stars of TREK, and his other cast-mates rancor at the leads' refusal to yield the spotlight just doesn't make sense. So what if he directed a sequel in which Scottie did pratfalls in the Jeffries tubes and a no-longer lithe Uhura engaged in an ill-advised fan dance? Shatner holds no bitterness about how his former cast-mates have bad-mouthed him.

And yet, and yet.... Who could have brought James Kirk to life like William Shatner? Who could take so negative a rep and turn it around to forge a new, self-parodying career (one of MIND MELD's highlights is an anecdote Shatner tells on himself in which, during an interview with Nichelle Nichols, the actress is shocked to discover that he doesn't want to hear how the TREK cast hated him)? Who could be so assured in his stardom that he could allow Nimoy to rag him about his age?

So please do endure, Bill. If you didn't exist, we'd have to invent you.

—Dan Persons



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CFQ Preview

Compiled by Dan Persons

THE PANIC ROOM (Columbia)

March 1

Single mom Jodie Foster has to fight off burglars from a locked room built to protect people from home invasions (not too paranoid, neh?). Doesn't sound very genre, but David Fincher is directing, and who ever dreamed something with the storyline of THE FIGHT CLUB would turn out to be one of the best genre offerings of 2000?

LONG TIME DEAD (Universal Focus)

Spring

Lukas Haas comes afoul of an evil Ouija board. Sounds like a whole lotta so what, but the director, Marcus Adams, is a former member of Meat Beat Manifesto, and the production has been picked up by Universal's art-house arm, which previously scored with such offerings as BEAUTIFUL CREATURES and MULHOLLAND DRIVE. There may be more to this than your typical Dimension slash-fest.

E.T. THE EXTRA-TER- RESTRIAL March 22 (Columbia)

CG magic will give E.T. a more expressive face and replace gun-wielding cops with walkie-talkie-wielding cops. Such tinkering probably isn't going to improve the movie any (how do you improve on greatness?).

Whether it does any appreciable damage we tend to doubt. In any case, it'll be great to see this indelibly affecting child's fantasy, arguably Spielberg's best film, back on the large screen again.



BLADE 2: BLOODHUNT (New Line)

March 22

When we all get together, it's beautiful. Undead vampire hunter Blade has to make amends with his former prey in order to battle a new evil: monstrous Reapers, blood-suckers spawned by an infectious virus. The original BLADE, directed by Stephen Norrington, was that rare comic-book adaptation that successfully mixed stylish filmmaking, kick-ass action, and credible storyline to result in a surprisingly entertaining action/adventure film. With Wesley Snipes's return and direction by Guillermo del Toro, BLADE 2 is poised to repeat its predecessor's success.



THE TIME MACHINE March 8 (Dreamworks)

The George Pal original was such a perfect little gem, do we really need a remake? H.G. Wells's grandson Simon put his health on the line to shoot this, so let's hope so.

RESIDENT EVIL (Columbia)

April 5

Because video game adaptations have been soooo successful, haven't they? And with Paul Anderson (SOLDIER, MORTAL KOMBAT and, yeeeeeeesh, EVENT HORIZON) directing, we know this film is going to kick major butt.

THE SCORPION KING

Universal Tries Hat Trick with Third MUMMY Film

by Mitch Persons

The climax of *THE MUMMY RETURNS* has hero Rick O'Connell (Brendan Fraser) doing hand-to-stinger combat with a half-human, half-scorpion good-guy-turned-bad-guy, played by World Wrestling Federation champion Dwayne Johnson (aka The Rock). In Universal's *THE SCORPION KING*, The Rock is back, but this time, as he was at the beginning of *THE MUMMY RETURNS*, he is totally human, and for most of the film, pretty much on the side the audience wants to cheer for.

"Well, I arc to being a good guy," said the charismatic and cordial Johnson. "In the beginning of *THE SCORPION KING*, I start off as an assassin. Then I lose my brother—he's killed right in front of me—and I turn into an avenging angel."

The avenging angel is called Mathayus, and he is the leader of a small but fierce band of desert warriors known as the Akkadians. To most of the world, Mathayus is revered as a brave soldier, almost a god. To others, he is regarded with the same fear as that most vicious of the desert dwellers, the scorpion. From that dreaded arachnid comes Mathayus's more notorious name: the Scorpion King.

The movie *THE SCORPION KING*, which is actually a prequel to *THE MUMMY RETURNS*, covers roughly the same time period as *MUMMY*'s opening: the dawn of Middle Eastern civilization. A warlord named Memnon (Steven Brand) is after absolute power. He is wiping out any and all tribes that stand in his way. Mathayus is summoned by Memnon's sworn enemies, tribal kings Takmet (Peter Facinelli) and Balthazar (Michael Clarke Duncan) to lead the Akkadians on an assault.

Mathayus must also kill Memnon's powerful spiritual advisor, who seems to wield an almost supernatural hold over the warrior. Mounted atop his trusty albino camel, Hanna, Mathayus brings his Akkadians to victory after victory. The Akkadians are well on their way to succeeding in their mission,



The Rock gets to test his charisma as *THE SCORPION KING*, a prequel to Universal's successful *MUMMY* series that may well become its own franchise.

but then Mathayus's brother is killed, and, as Johnson puts it, "I find that the sorcerer I made the pact to kill is actually a sorceress [Kelly Hu], who I eventually fall in love with."

For his role as Mathayus, Johnson had to incorporate into his considerable athletic abilities hand-to-hand combat, swordplay, and horse and camel riding. Of all these skills, though, one of the most difficult was mastering the art of sharing screen time with a temperamental camel.

"I had never ridden a camel prior to this film. I've ridden a horse or two, but never a camel. That's the great thing about this character I play: He's riding a beautiful albino camel and, literally, he's almost twenty feet in the air. It's an amazing sight once he gets up there. I did have stunt doubles to help me out. Even the camel, believe it or not, had doubles."

What can only be described as a twinkle comes into the wrestler's eye. "Unfortunately," he continued, offering the interviewer a glimpse of his well-known grin, "the original camel, who was a real sweetheart, passed away, and then we had to use his double, who was fifteen years younger and just nasty and mad at the world, throwing everybody. He even turned on me at one

point. I got a good dose of, well, whatever it is that comes out of a camel's mouth when he's angry. A little bit of it. It wasn't a pleasant experience."

With any luck, that bit of human/camel rapport will not make it into the final cut of the film. *THE SCORPION KING* was written by Jonathan Hales (the upcoming *STAR WARS EPISODE II: ATTACK OF THE CLONES*) and directed by Chuck Russell (*ERASER*, *THE MASK*, *A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 3: DREAM WARRIORS*). Producers are Sean Daniel, Jim Jacks, and Stephen Sommers (director of *THE MUMMY* and *THE MUMMY RETURNS*). Co-producers of the blockbuster are World Wrestling Federation owners Linda and Vince McMahon. *THE SCORPION KING* is scheduled to open in April, 2002.

Further News

by Dan Persons

It's going to take just a tad longer to find that shining planet — Bryan Singer has ankleed the *BATTLESTAR GALACTICA* remake. The project continues as producer Tom DeSanto looks for another director...*THE CORE* began filming late last year, with Aaron Eckhart as a scientist who discovers a prob-

lem with the Earth's core that threatens the future of the planet, and Hilary Swank as an astronaut who agrees to venture into "inner space" to right what's wrong. Jon Amiel is directing; Paramount is producing.... In further *HARRY POTTER* news, Kenneth Branagh has been signed to play the charismatic Gilderoy Lockhart in the second film, *HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS*. The film will boast same high-level production team and cast, and it is rumored that series will not end until every name-brand British actor has been cast in an episode.... Prescience and politics will mix in *IMAGINING ARGENTINA*, an adaptation of a novel by Lawrence Thornton about a Peron-era playwright who can foresee people's fates by looking into their faces. Antonio Banderas is set to star, with Christopher Hampton directing. Film is from Myriad Pictures.... *HYPERCUBE: CUBE 2* has been picked up by Lions Gate. Directed by cinematographer Andrzej Sekula, the film is a follow-up to the low-budget cult hit in which a group of strangers have to escape from a technological death-trap. The difference: This time the cube is four-dimensional, whatever the hell that means.... A link-up of cutting-edge filmmakers—including Steven Soderbergh, Spike Jonze, Alexander Payne and David Fincher—has yielded its first genre production: *SOLARIS*, a remake of the moody, Russian SF epic. Soderbergh is slated to direct.... Universal still hopes that audiences want to watch *THE WATCHMEN*. The much-delayed, eagerly-awaited project is back on, with David Hayter scripting and in line to direct.... In *THE BRIDE WORE BLACK*, the ghost of a jilted bride sets out to disrupt a wedding. Script is by Maurice Chauvet; Natalie Portman is to star; producer is Twentieth Century Fox.... *BILLY ELLIOT* star Jamie Bell and *LORD OF THE RINGS* Gollum Andy Serkis are teaming up to star in an untitled WWII thriller in which a group of soldiers are stalked by an inhuman assassin. Michael J. Bassett scripted and is directing.

CFQ

ROLLERBALL

McTiernan's Remake Isn't Just '70s Redux, and Rebecca Romijn-Stamos's Aurora Isn't Just Eye Candy

By Chuck Wagner

ROLLERBALL, the remake of the '75 Roman-arena allegory, co-stars Chris Klein, Rebecca Romijn-Stamos, and LL Cool J as expatriate athletes who find themselves trapped in a sport that could turn them into international superstars...if it doesn't kill them first. "We ran a school for three months before production," said director John McTiernan about the rigors of filming the story, now set in the present rather than the corporate-controlled far future. "You can wind up with people actually making trips to the emergency room. Pretty much, we avoided that. We had a million bruises, a thousand sprains, but no memorial services. The movie will not be dedicated to anyone who died in its making."

Chris Klein had previously cut out a screen career for himself in such projects as *HERE ON EARTH* and *AMERICAN PIE*. Now, facing the more physical demands of *ROLLERBALL*'s lead,

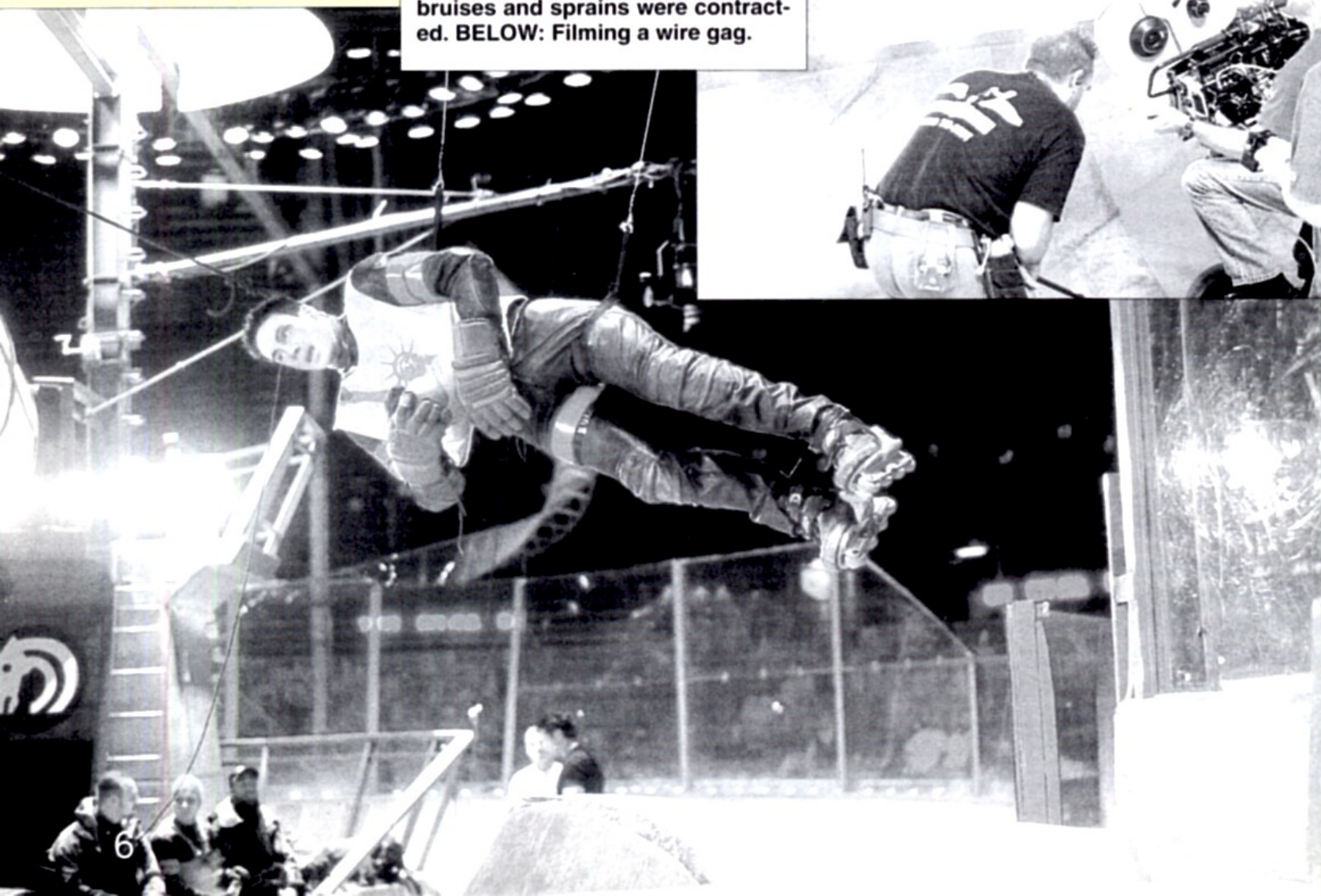
he was able to cope. "He was a jock, so he was up for learning," said McTiernan. "But no, he'd never done any of that sort of stuff. We sent him off to an Olympic training center in Calgary for nearly three months.... It's very hard to stay on skates for hour after hour. It's very hard to skate on a track like this without getting yourself hurt."

Romijn-Stamos had previously rocketed to acclaim and fan awareness as Mystique in *X-MEN*. Now she takes to the track as Aurora, a female rollerballer. "She'd nev-

er done anything like this," McTiernan said. "We had to teach her to ride a motorcycle. She loved it. She's great at it."

Continued Romijn-Stamos, "Playing Mystique definitely helped me segue from modeling and acting on a television series into the public eye as a film actress. Anytime you are lucky enough to be in a movie as big as *X-MEN*, it is certainly going to help your career. I had met with John McTiernan months before *X-MEN* came out, and luckily they still had not cast Aurora when we met again."

OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS: No fatalities were logged in filming *ROLLERBALL*'s strenuous competition sequences, but plenty of bruises and sprains were contracted. **BELOW:** Filming a wire gag.



The original *ROLLERBALL* had two main female characters—both of whom were current or former girlfriends of the main character and got nowhere near the action. "My character in the new *ROLLERBALL* didn't even really exist in the original," Romijn-Stamos said. "The basic concept of the movie is the same, but the script is completely different from the first. First of all, they've added girls to the teams now. The female characters in the first one were more or

UNEXPECTED ALLIES: Chris Klein (below) is an American athlete seeking stardom, and Rebecca Romijn-Stamos (left) is the enigmatic rollerballer Aurora in a world of deadly sport.



less set dressing. They weren't necessary to the story at all. My character, Aurora, not only plays on the team as a motorcycle rider, but she also helps Jonathan to escape—both literally and figuratively.”

Could she find parallels between X-MEN and ROLLERBALL? “In X-MEN, I had to learn some martial arts moves. In ROLLERBALL, I had to learn to ride a motorcycle, which I now love. McT had me doing my own stunt on my fourth day of riding—I had to ride over a guy. It was pretty scary. He wanted us to do as many of our own stunts as possible. I will tell you that we had so many incredible athletes on the set, and you could watch these guys—the extreme skaters, for example—doing crazy shit during any break or lunch, and be blown away.”

At least Aurora didn't require Mystique's maintenance schedule. “ROLLERBALL is a lot less makeup and a lot more leather,” the actress noted. “I certainly didn't miss spending ten hours in the makeup chair. What I liked about my character in ROLLERBALL was that she was dark, somber, and mysterious. The fact that she has a scar on her face [which, by the way, never is explained] and hides behind a helmet that covers her

face implies that she has a great deal of pain in her past. She's strong and cool, only becoming vulnerable when she opens herself up to Jonathan. Basically, she's nothing like me, which was great. I could be in a bad mood on the set if I wanted, and no one would try to get me out of it, because they just thought I was in character.

“It's fun to learn new things. I like to get as involved as possible with the action. It makes me feel more connected to the character. I can't wait to see how it comes together, because action sequences can be quite tedious to shoot—it's basically a bunch of two-second shots strung together.” **CFQ**



BABYLON 5: LEGEND OF THE RANGERS

Life After CRUSADES: The Sci Fi Channel Gives Straczynski Another Shot

By Frank Garcia

It has been just two years since the untimely death of CRUSADE, J. Michael Straczynski's beloved but short-lived BABYLON 5 spinoff series. But B5 fans now have a new vision on the horizon: It's THE LEGEND OF THE RANGERS: TO LIVE AND DIE IN STARLIGHT, a television movie, commissioned by Sci Fi Channel, that owes its existence to very strong B5 reruns on the network. Depending on its reception, the film just might spawn a third series set in the B5 universe.

"The Sci Fi Channel has realized that the show has endured and has grown over time," said series creator, executive producer, and writer Joe Straczynski. "The show has run a couple of dozen times now in both syndication and on TNT. The reality is that B5 is Sci Fi Channel's top-ten or top-five highest rated show week after week, which [says] that the old audience is still hanging out and still discovering it, and those who go away are replaced by new viewers checking it out for the first time.

"They said, 'Let's do something in this universe and see if we can make this happen all over again a second time.'"

However, to make RANGERS a reality, the producers had to move fast. In the spring of 2001, all of Hollywood was in fear of a potential writers and actors strike. Networks were stockpiling extra episodes of their TV series. Feature film schedules were given either an immediate greenlight or postponed until after a impending strike. A lot of scripts were written and sold. "The irony was, because of the timing, where they made that decision," said Straczynski. "We were coming out close to the [deadlines for the] writers/actors strike [during the summer]. I ended up doing the outline in three or four days and the script in a week and a half."

To avoid being caught up in a strike, RANGERS was fast-tracked and, for bud-

getary reasons, sent north to Vancouver, Canada to film on a tight, four-week schedule in May/June, 2001. However, the cost of this move was that none of the series' original key craftsmen—including Optic Nerve Studios' makeup wizard John Vulich, costume designer Anne Bruce-Aling, and production designer John Iacovelli—were able to participate. These positions were given to highly experienced Vancouver-based artists Bill Terezakis, who reproduced the Minbari 'bone crest' makeup, Crystine Booth, who clothed the Rangers, and Steve Geaghan, who designed the sets.

"We had to kind of start from zero here as we did back in L.A.," said Straczynski. "It's going very smoothly. We are now on-schedule and on-budget."

To insure that the film would be an authentic, Babylon 5 adventure, veteran B5 director Michael Vejar was tapped to helm. Vejar had directed twelve episodes of the series, and two of the television films: IN THE BEGINNING and A CALL TO ARMS.

RANGERS was able to get off the ground quickly because

the Babylon 5 universe was Straczynski's own creation. He had single-handedly written 91 of the 110 episodes over the five years of the original series, plus five movies. "This is a universe where so much is known. It wasn't that difficult for me," said Straczynski. "The Rangers were introduced as a concept in the third season and proved to be very popular with the fans. Of course, I had worked out the history of the Rangers back a thousand years—who are they and what are they doing during the formation of the Alliance."

In spite of the tremendous two-year gap between series, Straczynski said it did not feel like *deja vu* to return to his magnum opus. "I never really left it entirely. We got to CRUSADE, and then there were novels and short stories set in the B5 universe, so I never really had a chance to quite get

STRACZYNSKI STRUTS: Fan favorites the Rangers return to protect the universe in LEGEND OF THE RANGERS: TO LIVE AND DIE IN STARLIGHT.



out of it. The characters are very much still with me. It's never really gone away."

What **RANGERS** delivers is a new premise with an intriguing collection of characters representing four species who serve aboard a Minbari spacecraft, the Liandra. As the film opens, David Martel is second-in-command of a Ranger vessel, the Enfalli. When the ship disastrously engages a group of raider ships, Martel, ignoring the Ranger credo, "To live for The One and Die for The One," or-



LIVING THE LEGEND: Above, from left to right: Alex Zahara, Myriam Sirois, Dylan Neal, Dean Marshall, Warren T. Takeuchi, and Andreas Katsulas join forces to prove there's life beyond Babylon.



ders a retreat which places him in a disciplinary hearing with the High Council. But David has an unexpected ally in Citizen G'Kar, the Narn hero from the Shadow War.

G'Kar's support gives David a new assignment: command of the Liandra and a new mission. With a hand-picked crew, David escorts another vessel, the Valen, on a secret and highly dangerous mission. When the two ships are ambushed by an alien race never before encountered, David must salvage the mission, uncover the secrets of the alien race, and return his crew

home safely. **RANGERS** is, in Straczynski's

words, "a retelling of the Arthurian story. When Arthur first came to power, he had to sort of take a disparate group of provinces, competing fiefdoms, and small kingdoms, and unite them under one flag, one leader, and one sword. The Rangers are now asked to help create that empire—to unite the various worlds that need that help; to arbitrate the political disagreements between them; and to call in the fleet when necessary and encourage others to join. Basically, they look out for the interests of the Alliance, out in the fringe.

"There are political stories in outer space, and this has some elements of that. Of course it's about empire building, because there's never been stories about empire building on television. A lot of the film is characters and the action stuff."

To bring the film's major characters to life, Straczynski and company endured an exhausting casting process where almost all the roles were filled by experienced Canadian actors. The most important role in the film is David Martel, the leader and captain of the Liandra. Canadian actor Dylan Neal captured the part. "At the reading, he was astonishingly professional, but then, the whole cast is," said Straczynski. "I tend to put out audition 'sides' [script pages] with massive reams of dialogue to see if they can handle mouthfuls of the stuff. He had to remember about fifteen pages worth of dialogue and follow it through in one sitting. He was just letter-perfect every time. He just had the sensibility, accessibility, and the energy we were looking for. He's a very nice guy, which is always an important part. We try to find people we want to spend time with for a

couple of years. We try and avoid, if possible, those who may be prima donnas, who are difficult to work with."

The final cast included Alex Zahara as Dulann, second-in-command and David's Minbari advisor; Myriam Sirois as Sarah Cantrell, a weapons specialist; Enid Raye Adams as Firell, a Minbari healer; Warren Takeuchi as Kitaro Sasaki, a communication and translations specialist; Dean Marshall as Malcolm Bridges, a covert intelligence officer; and David Storch as Tafeek; a political and first-contact person. Two recent Ranger recruits are played by Jennie Rebecca Hogan and Gus Lynch. Also in the cast are Mackenzie Gray as Minister Kafta; Todd Sandorminsky as Tannier; Bernard Cuffling as Sindell; and Andrew Kavadas as Capt. Gregg, a character whose name comes courtesy of the lucky winner of a Sci Fi Channel contest.

"Across the board, they're all energetic and enthusiastic about the project," said Straczynski. "They're excited. They gradually came to realize what the show was. Most of them didn't quite know what Babylon 5 was, and discovering what it is has only heightened their enthusiasm for the project.

"We had our read-throughs with all the cast before we began. We could see, in that initial reading, that the chemistry was there. They like each other. They're really tight as a group. They'd go to dinner and hang out. It's really developed a very nice chemistry."

Illustrating just how the actors were bonding, Straczynski cited actress Myriam Sirois as an example: "Myriam was saying how bizarre it was—she and Dylan have almost a brother-and-sister relationship. There are those in the cast who *are* their

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LEGEND OF THE RANGERS

Alex Zahara

A Frequent Guest on SF TV Looks to Settle In as a Pious Warrior

Actor Alex Zahara was astonished. The very first day he walked in to participate in a cast read-through of *BABYLON 5: THE LEGEND OF THE RANGERS*, he was surprised to discover that a group of carefully selected strangers—all the actors who were cast in the film—were in sync with each other. “It was seriously great from the get-go!” said the actor. “We hadn’t met. Everyone was prepared for the read, and I came in, last minute. I didn’t get a chance to say hello to Dylan Neal and the others, but it didn’t matter. We just sat down and it *clicked*. Right from the first day of filming, *bang*, it was literally like we’d all gone through training together. I think, all of us being actors, living day to day with the job and that lifestyle, we shared that common bond. When we stepped through that [starship] bridge, trust me, we’d already gone through our years of training and schooling to get where we are. We had an instant affinity with each other. We got on great and went out with each other to dinner a couple of times.”

Zahara was in an envious position. He’d been cast as Dulann, the Minbari second-in-command of the starship *Lian-dra*, under the leadership of Captain David Martel, as played by fellow Canuck Dylan Neal.

To get the part, said Zahara, it was first necessary to know the character. “In my audition piece, I thought of him as a samurai/monk,” said Zahara. “I carried Dulann around in my body.”

The physical metamorphosis “took two and a half hours. I literally transformed; it sent me to another place, sent me to the land where Dulann lives. The makeup was like putting the last slab of cement to a building. I built the infrastructure, but the

makeup and costume were my edifice. We worked together very well. On the set, with complete makeup, playing the character, I felt many layers of Dulann. I even wrote a back-history for him before I auditioned.”

Like fellow B5 actor Andreas Katsulas, Zahara is a rare breed among actors: tolerant in working with elaborate, prosthetic makeup. “I had done a *STARGATE* episode [“Foot-hold”], where I had done full-facial and body prosthetics. It took me four and a half hours in the chair, every day. Dulann is only two and half hours a day. I got a little antsy in the chair once in a while, but it gave me time to reflect. It gave me a chance to calm down and give the makeup artists a chance to apply the makeup. I meditated during that time. I’d listen to classical music. Sometimes I even fell asleep.”

To date, Zahara’s racked up an impressive resume that includes extensive feature, theatre, and television credits. He was a Norseman in John McTiernan’s *THE 13TH WARRIOR*, and won a 1998 Jessie Richardson theater award for *MOJO*. Notably, he’s featured in Vancouver-filmed genre television such as *ANDROMEDA* [“Music of a Distant Drum”], *DARK ANGEL* [“Rising” and “Red”], *THE OUTER LIMITS* [“Tribunal”], and three *STARGATE* episodes. Upon being cast in *RANGERS*, Zahara sat down and read Joe Straczynski’s latest opus. “It really sucked me in. It really transported me somewhere else. I was enthralled—it was very, very good. I thought all the characters were very well-rounded. It’s really great to read a script that well-written. It was like Greek drama.”

As further research before shooting started in Vancouver, Canada, Zahara studied B5



MEETING AT MINBAR: With a healthy roster of Canadian-based SF series under his belt, actor Alex Zahara delved into his character’s past when prepping for his role as the Minbari Dulann in *LEGEND OF THE RANGERS*.

episodes. “It’s incredibly, intricately well-written. The people play it with such conviction and passion—there’s emotional investment in it. [In other SF TV shows,] everyone’s so cool all the time. In this show, they lose their cool. They blow up; they have fights; they get passionate about things; they laugh like crazy; they make mistakes. They’re not trying to be cool. They’re being their characters.”

So how does Zahara envision Dulann’s relationship with Martel? “David and Dulann are very complementary. They really balance each other; they’re two sides of a coin. David has a lot going that Dulann wishes he could express. Dulann has a foot in both worlds. He’s a Minbari but he also respects the way that humans express themselves. He admires that. Aboard the *Lian-dra*, David is a very expressive guy.”

As second-in-command, Dulann acts as David’s quiet advisor. “You can’t run a ship without perspectives,” said Zahara. “That’s exactly what Dulann does. He doesn’t tell David what to do. He [offers] David a path: ‘You may wish to take this route or this other path here. You decide.’ They provide support and options for each other.”

Once filming got underway, the cast chemistry surfaced

again in a crucial ceremonial scene aboard the starship *Lian-dra*. In this scene, director Michael Vejar used a steadicam to slowly pan the circle of actors as they delivered their lines. According to Zahara, if anyone had flubbed their lines, the whole scene would have had to be reshot from the beginning. “It was basically all done in one take. They started on me and shot around the room with a steadicam. Then, after that, they just went into the over-the-shoulder coverage that they needed. For the most part, yeah, it was one take. They had a crane coming down to the middle of us and then panning around to us.”

Having completed the film’s arduous four-week schedule, Zahara looked back and remarked, “It was the best, most family-oriented feeling I’ve had. We worked long days. Oftentimes, you get stuck on a show and the people there are unhappy. Everyone on this show felt that they wanted to be there. I had so much fun; it was a pleasure. I would come and visit on days when I wasn’t working and people would ask, ‘What are you doing?’ I’d say, ‘Well, I want to be here...’ I wanted to hang out with these people.”

—Frank Garcia

characters. We try and cast [actors] who are close to the parts they are portraying. That's where my strongest suit is in casting. I know how people work together, and I have a good eye for people.

"After we hired Dylan, the fans got enthused because the fans, being fans, were scouring for information all about it," explained Straczynski. "The British Columbia Film Commission lists regularly all the productions that are in Vancouver. They listed the names of some of our cast members. [Fans] got ahold of this and searched for background photos, resumes, and got it together in a matter of hours.

"Someone said on the web that we had worked before. 'You're out of your mind! We hadn't worked before!' I followed the [web] links and found his resume, which listed a CAPTAIN POWER credit: He worked with us when he was fourteen years old, playing young Jonathan Power in [a two-part episode,] 'A Summoning of Thunder,' which I wrote.

"Neither of us knew this; we read it on the Internet. We took Dylan to dinner that night. He hadn't thought about it. We hadn't any idea that we worked with him before!"

The coincidences didn't stop there. Straczynski realized, "We started filming on this movie two years to the day after we finished up post-production on CRUSADE. It's a nice little bookend."

Another important and familiar cast-member who joined the cast was none other than Andreas Katsulas. After a three-year break, it was time to bring G'Kar, our favorite Narn, back to life. With this casting, said Straczynski, BABYLON 5's persistent mythos returned in full force.

On the day that Straczynski received the green light to write the outline for the film, he went out to dinner. "I knew I wanted one B5 person to be in it, and I was trying to decide who that was going to be. Since B5 wrapped, I've only seen Andreas once over the years. We were being interviewed by Sci Fi Channel about [the network] picking up BABYLON 5. In all that time, I hadn't seen him for two years."

When he sat down to begin his dinner, Straczynski was surprised to discover Katsulas sitting at the very next booth. "This was just twenty minutes after getting the news of going ahead with the outline. When the universe sends out a telegram like that, you gotta pay attention!"

When Katsulas arrived in Vancouver, Straczynski was there to observe the moment. "It was very natural to get back into the harness again. He just went right back into it, as if no time at all had passed. The first day he was shooting up here, we were waiting for a scene to come up." Katsulas had been hesitant about how quickly the character would return to him. "When he hit the stage for the first rehearsal, it was letter-perfect. Doug said, 'That's G'Kar!'"

The first day of shooting was so hectic that Straczynski couldn't recall specifics. "I was so caught up in the ten thousand small things that I had to do to start production. I was on the set a lot shooting with my camera. It's just a blur of motion and running around being crazy."

At the time of this interview, just midway through shooting, both Sci Fi Channel and Warner Brothers had registered positive feedback from what dailies had been screened. "The network loves what they're seeing a lot," Straczynski said. "Warner Brothers saw the footage and said it is a handsome-looking show."

An important aspect of the movie will be the special effects as designed and executed by Gajdecki Visual Effects, an award-winning SFX company. With the passage of two years since the last BABYLON 5 episode, RANGERS will benefit from the latest in state-of-the-art imagery. Straczynski said that he had seen, in rough form, the visuals for Minbar, Tuzenor, and the spaceships, and declared them as, "arguably ahead of what we did before. Whenever I try to do a new B5 project, I try and do one thing that no one's ever done before, whether its archaeological science fiction in CRUSADE, political stuff in B5, to visuals that are just different. The Shadow vessels gave a whole new look in the BABYLON 5 universe."

In RANGERS, it's Liandra's gunnery pod that delivers the push-the-envelope goods. In combat situations, Sarah Cantrell, the ship's weapons officer, dives through a triangular port, sliding into a null-gravity portal. Inside there, she has direct tactile control over the ship's weaponry. "It becomes the 360-degree environment outside the ship," said Straczynski. "Where she points, the ship fires, as if it was all coming from her. It's her point of view; the decision-making process is handled instantaneously, in a flash. Visually, it should be a very stunning effect. Her neurons correspond to parts of the ship. Upside down, turning around,



AND DEADLY'S SUPPOSED TO BE BAD?
Myriam Sirois is weapons specialist Sarah Cantrell.

she is the ship gunnery."

Straczynski feels very comfortable about LEGEND OF THE RANGERS' chances at becoming a TV series. The network said that they could make a decision based on a rough cut of the film, or wait until the premiere broadcast ratings to determine if a "green light" will be issued. "Our odds are very good right now, given the reaction from the network and studio," Straczynski said. "It's in very good shape. The odds I think are about eighty percent. Pretty damn good odds."

If RANGERS goes to series, fans can expect some crossovers with both B5 and CRUSADE. With the series' premise set two years prior to CRUSADE's storyline, you can eventually expect to see the two storylines converge. "This is a traveling show," said Straczynski. "I wouldn't be surprised to see us going to Babylon 5, or to Centauri Prime, or Narn. I think we'll definitely see our other characters again."

And what of the fate of CRUSADE itself? When the short-lived series was broadcast in the spring of 2001 on Sci Fi Channel, the ratings, like B5, were quite strong. Said Straczynski, "I would be nothing but pleased if they were to come back and say 'We would like more...' I think they want to test the waters with [RANGERS] first, and then see what happens from there."

CFQ

PIXAR'S NEW DIGS

*They're the Fastest Growing Force in Filmmaking.
Why Not Rule in Comfort?*

By Lawrence French

After the back-to-back successes of *TOY STORY* and *A BUG'S LIFE*, Pixar began planning a new project that would cost roughly the same as one of its movies: A new studio facility outside of San Francisco that would be a home away from home for 550 Pixar employees and cater to the very specialized needs of computer animation production. The result is a beautiful, \$88 million structure, which, like Pixar's movies, is yet another success story in the production company's short history.

The facility was designed by the architectural firm of Bohlin, Cywinski, and Jackson, who were also responsible for Bill Gates's hillside compound in Seattle, as well as several buildings for Apple Computers, Pixar chairman Steve Jobs's other company. Unlike his hands-off attitude towards Pixar's movies, Jobs took a more active interest in the details and design of

Pixar's new campus. "I like to say that it was Steve Jobs's feature film," observed Lasseter. "Steve really directed it, and he had a great architect: Peter Bohlin and his firm. Tom Carlisle and Craig Payne were the two lead designers from Pixar who helped out, and I was also involved occasionally throughout the design of it."

The building is located on sixteen acres of newly landscaped property in Emeryville, California, an industrial hamlet nestled between Berkeley and Oakland, right across the bay from San Francisco (and less than a mile from Phil Tippett's neighboring effects facility in Berkeley). The 215,000 square-foot, brick-and-glass-clad building is dominated by a cavernous central atrium, where a series of soaring skylights and glass walls allow the warm California sun to bathe the structure's common areas, including

the Luxo Café (named for the spirited table lamps that populated Pixar's debut short), and three state-of-the-art screening rooms. Outside the atrium is a broad patio that borders a large, grassy amphitheater. Nearby are soccer and volleyball fields and a recently planted apple orchard. "Early on," said Lasseter, "when we first got the property, there was an idea of doing a studio that had multiple buildings, so it would be more like an old-fashioned movie studio with some bungalows and five main buildings for different projects. One building would



EDIFICE COMPLEX (YES, WE KNOW, OLD JOKE): Custom-glazed bricks and retro-tech design come together to suggest a company that uses the latest technology to tell undeniably human stories.

have the café and a big theater, so you'd have the feeling of a studio lot. What happened was

that, while we were in our old building, we ran out of room and had to move across the street into a second building. Almost immediately, it felt like two different companies, and the continuity of knowledge wasn't being carried through. So when Steve Jobs and I were talking about this new building, I said, 'Let's get back together again. We need to all be in one building.' We scrapped the concept of multiple buildings in order to get everyone together."

Lasseter also wanted the building to





ART INTEGRATES LIFE: By accident or design, the industrial settings of *MONSTERS, INC.* (above) are mirrored in Pixar's new home. Below: The building's spacious entrance.

have a very warm and friendly feel, as opposed to it being a high-tech, corporate monolith. "We are a very high-tech studio," said Lasseter, "but I didn't want the facility to be visually high-tech. I wanted it to have a lot of earthly materials, and to appear more friendly by using wood and brick. Originally, it was going to be an all-steel building, until Tom Carlisle, our facilities director, hired a great photographer and he went around and took pictures of old brick buildings and warehouses in San Francisco. We looked at those and thought there was something really wonderful about them, so the design changed and it became much more brick-oriented. Then Steve Jobs really got into it, to the point of using wood in the ceilings. Normally, they use corrugated metal, and pour the concrete for the second floor on top of that. Instead, we put wood down, and laid the concrete on top of that, so even though it's a new building that is very high-tech, it's much more inviting."

The building also boasts amenities that make it seem more like a playground than a workplace: A swimming pool, basketball court, pool tables, soccer field, gym, and movie theater are just some of the diversions available to employees during and after their workday. The only thing the facilities don't have is a bowling alley. "We really love it," Lasseter said. "What's especially nice is that the money we made from *A BUG'S LIFE* is what paid for the building, so it's

good old Flik coming through for us. Now all of the people who worked really hard on *A BUG'S LIFE* have gotten something back for all of their hard work."

Strangely, Pixar's new building was designed concurrently with the making of *MONSTERS, INC.*, which may explain

why the two projects seem to have some design similarities, such as the prominent use of brickwork and the large open atrium, which mirror the "scare floor" in *MONSTERS, INC.*'s monster factory. "People have commented about that," said production designer Harley Jessup, "but when we designed this movie, we





SPANNING THE CORPORATION: MONSTER, INC. director Pete Docter (left) poses with John Lasseter on one of Pixar's bridges.

were still in our old building, and did [the film design] independently [of the office design]. They do have similar ideas, though, because we used a lot of concrete and corrugated metal, and tried to get a real 'industry' feel to the factory, so it seems like it really could work. There's also a big lobby the monsters come into, which is like a crossroads for all the different scare floors at the factory, and that's sort of similar to the atrium in our new building."

Like the brick and steel buildings in Pittsburgh that influenced MONSTERS, INC., Pixar's new structure has beautiful, exposed steel-work, almost as if it were part of a sculpture by Louise Nevelson. In fact, Nevelson's black steel 'Sky Tower' seems as if it could be the inspiration for the arching, black steel girders that support a long sky-bridge that floats majestically across the building's open atrium lobby. "As we designed the atrium, it kept getting bigger and bigger," said Carlisle, "so it was almost like having two separate buildings. Peter Bohlin's idea was to tie it together with two second-story bridges, so people could get back and forth easily. Then he did one of the bridges arched, because that makes it stand out more. The use of exposed steel was inspired by our looking at buildings from the '20s and '30s, when a lot of train stations and industrial buildings were all built using steel, but with the kind of craftsmanship that you don't see nowadays.

Buildings like the Gare d'Orsay in Paris (now an art museum, and also the setting of the Orson Welles film THE TRIAL) were an inspiration for us, because we wanted to use steel in an artistic way, like people did before they started covering it up.

"We really had to search for a steel manufacturer who could do this kind of job, because it all had to be bolted together, and not welded. Today, people don't bolt buildings together, because it's much more labor-intensive. With welding, nobody cares how clean you make it, because it's all going to be covered up anyway. But if the steel isn't covered up, you take a lot more care to make sure it looks good."

The multi-colored brick used for the facade and interior of the edifice also provided some difficult hurdles. "We loved the multi-colored brick that was used in the old Hills Bros. coffee plant in San Francisco," explained Lasseter, "so we tracked down what type of brick they used, and it turned out to be made at this particular type of beehive kiln. The problem was, one of the only beehive kilns left that fired those kind of bricks was a place in Washington State, and the kiln had been out of commission for years. So we paid to have them restore the kiln and fire the bricks we needed to get this special kind of look."

"We picked each of the seven colors of the bricks," said Carlisle. "We call it the

Pixar blend because there's a certain percentage of each color brick in the building, and they're already mellowing and blending together nicely, which is exactly what you want to happen. In ten years, they'll be even more subtle. That's another thing Steve Jobs always said, he wanted to make a building that would still look good one hundred years from now. A lot of buildings surrounding us were built in the early 1900's and are still beautiful. So we wanted to use materials we knew would stand up and look good in the years to come."

Architect Peter Bohlin also studied and discussed with Steve Jobs and John Lasseter how Pixar actually operates as a studio before coming up with the central atrium design, which encourages chance encounters. "We are really people-oriented," said Lasseter, "and that's what makes us great, not the technology. By the design of the central atrium, where you have all of the public amenities—the café, the mailroom, the rest rooms, the theater—what happens is it brings people out of their offices and into the center of the building, and you always end up running into other people. It encourages meetings in the hallways, and from the two sky-bridges you're always seeing people or hearing people yell for each other or throwing things—paper airplanes—from the bridges, so it's a lot of fun. I'm really proud that there's this attention to detail in the building. That makes it very much like our movies."

CFO

PIXAR IN PROCESS

Winding Up the Disney Pact With a Film a Year

By Lawrence French

Five years after the mad stampede that saw practically every Hollywood studio trying to claim a piece of Disney's animation pie, the dust has settled and the remaining players are pretty much as expected: The two top wannabes, Fox and Warners, have shuttered or dramatically scaled back their animation plans after having released a series of expensive duds. Left standing tall are Disney, Dreamworks, and Pixar. And with SHREK and TOY STORY 2 having become two of the highest-grossing animated films ever made, there seems to be a subtle shift taking place within the animation field. One only has to look at the grosses of the last three 2-D releases from Disney and Dreamworks (THE EMPEROR'S NEW GROOVE, THE ROAD TO EL DORADO, and ATLANTIS). Combined, they have grossed less than either SHREK or TOY STORY 2 have on their own.

It seems likely that computer animation will continue to further erode the popularity, as well as the viability, of cel animation. Like digital projection, it won't happen overnight, but as Pixar, Pacific Data Images, and Disney itself concentrate more and more on less-costly CGI projects, the spotlight will inevitably move away from cel animation. And Pixar is already gearing up to meet the challenge with four new films slated to be released annually, starting in the summer of 2003.

First at bat will be Andrew Stanton's FINDING NEMO, an undersea adventure story be-

tween a father clownfish and his young son, Nemo, who gets stolen away from his idyllic coral reef home. The timid father has to venture beyond the safety of his familiar surroundings and search the open ocean in order to rescue his son. This undersea setting will take CGI into the world explored previously by THE LITTLE MERMAID, but with the many newer possibilities that 3-D computer graphics can provide. "That's going to be the exciting part about it," said Stanton. "I'd love to see the undersea world done in computer graphics, and done right. Hopefully, we'll be the people to do it."

Stanton named the son in FINDING NEMO after Jules Verne's famed Captain Nemo from *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, and laughingly admitted, "To be honest, I don't know if I'll be cursing myself until the day I die for picking that title! But for me, the aquatic world is another frontier that I feel I haven't gotten to see as an adult the way I remember it as a kid. And the reason I picked that name was due to its aquatic associations, and also because Nemo means 'nothing' or 'nobody' in Latin. It doesn't apply to the story anymore, but I was originally fascinated with that idea. Thinking about it, it makes more sense why Captain Nemo was named that. And I thought using the name 'nothing' for a kid, who was feeling he was overlooked, would be interesting. It was really just me being heady, and then I got stuck on the name because it felt aquatic. The picture is a father-and-son love story, directly attacking some of the issues be-



BOYS AND THEIR TOY (STORY): Andrew Stanton and Joe Ranft stand by as John Lasseter shows off his new, and very Pixar-like, mini-car.

tween fathers and sons. I always felt that was something you don't see too much of, particularly in animated movies, so it seemed fresh. I'm also very familiar with the subject, having a son of my own, as well as being a son, so there's a lot of material for me to mine "

After FINDING NEMO, Pixar's upcoming projects are all unnamed, but include stories to be directed by an increasingly large stable of talented directors. Pixar chairman Steve Jobs outlined these projects in his 2000 report to shareholders: "John Lasseter, acknowledged as one of the finest storytellers and directors in the movie industry, is at work [on an original story idea] with TOY STORY 2 co-director Lee Unkrich for our 2004 release. Brad Bird, the highly acclaimed screenwriter and director of the critically received THE IRON GIANT [who joined Pixar in early 2000], has brought with him a terrific story that he will direct and we plan to release in 2005. And Jan Pinkava, the director of our Oscar-winning short film, GERI'S GAME, will direct a film for release in 2006."

It seems likely that each of these projects will eventually have a co-director joining them. Lee Unkrich, who will co-direct John Lasseter's new film, noted that there are so many decisions to make on a daily basis that it's almost impossible for one person to direct a film: "John did it on TOY STORY, but it nearly killed him. He was living here constantly and it really took a lot out of him. So after that, we

looked at the model used at other studios'

animated films, and the work is typically divided between two people. We tried that on TOY STORY 2, where originally there were two directors at the helm, kind of equally (Ash Brannon and Colin Brady). Then after seeing how two equal directors worked with the crew, we decided to have a lead director, where the buck stops with that person. It helps eliminate any confusion about who to listen to, if you should get conflicting instructions. So now we've settled into this model, where we have a lead director, with one or two co-directors underneath him. So John came on as the lead director of TOY STORY 2, with Ash Brannon and myself as co-directors. On A BUG'S LIFE, John was the lead director, and Andrew Stanton was the co-director. On Pixar's next film, FINDING NEMO, Andrew Stanton will be the lead director, and at the moment, he doesn't have a co-director, but I think he may eventually get one."

With the release of Pixar's seventh film in 2005, their co-production deal with Disney is set to end. It will be interesting to see if this successful partnership can be maintained. It seems a match made in heaven, but so did the partnership between Disney chairman Michael Eisner and his ex-employee, Jeffrey Katzenberg (who ended up becoming Disney's biggest competitor). The same thing might just happen with Pixar's strong-willed chairman, Steve Jobs. **CFQ**

THE MAN WITH NO EYES

*Some People Call Him the Space Cowboy.
The Sci Fi Channel Calls Him the Next
Wave in Innovative Filmmaking*

By Denise Dumars

It may have been a cool summer night in Los Angeles, but it was high noon in outer space. Long-time writing partners Timothy Abram Cox and David Goodin, along with their producer, Tavin Marin Titus, were discussing the completion of THE MAN WITH NO EYES, the first short film produced by the Sci Fi Lab's Exposure Studios, the institution formed out of the Sci Fi Channel series EXPOSURE. "Without Dave, there would be no brilliant ideas," said Cox, whose wild laugh makes his enthusiasm for the project contagious.

Titus discussed her role in the project: "I was brought on board

about...a half hour before the movie? It was five weeks before we started filming what then was a very ambitious short film project. I'd worked in short film before, but nothing like this project. It had a very low budget, but at the same time it was an incredible opportunity for them. It is a sci-fi western, which has elements that, when you're working in the short film format, are extremely challenging. As a producer, I told them the reality of the situation compared to the fantasy. We sat down and decided to go with the fantasy anyway.



"Due to the filmmakers' enthusiasm and everyone's hard work, we were able to pull off a lot of things that I honestly didn't think we could pull off before the film was made, including working with animals such as horses, some pretty intricate special effects, and just working on a vast location, which a western really calls for."

Filmed at the Valuzet ranch, which has often been used as a location for westerns and other films, *THE MAN WITH NO EYES* was completed "in four days and a couple of hours in Panavision's parking lot," Titus said, laughing. "Tim has such a shot-oriented background that when we knew we had to alter a shot sequence or come up with something else due to time limitations, he was able to come up with creative decisions that needed to be made on the spur of the moment."

Tavin, Tim, and Dave won't comment on the amount of money Exposure Studios gave

them to make the film, except to say that it was, according to Titus, "very, very low. Everybody donated their services, down to the horses. The special effects artists are looking at it as a showcase for their talents as well, so they had a reason to do this for free." Young hopefuls in the industry who had the skills and the creativity to accomplish the goals of the film were brought in to work on the film.

"The Sci Fi Channel had formed a relationship with Panavision, which was instrumental in us getting our camera gear. The film was shot with two HD 24P [digital film] cameras. We're making a short film and here we have the same cameras they used in *THE PHANTOM MENACE!* Not only did we get them, but our relationship with our Director of Photography got us a jive arm, which is like a crane effect. So the show came out much more cinematic than it would have without their support."

Titus had high praise for

Exposure Studios. "If we needed their help, their input, they were a phone call away."

"We were the guinea pig for the new project. We tried to lay the groundwork for a lot of the relationships we formed to continue on Exposure Studios' later projects."

Tim Cox and David Goodin are co-writers of the script; Goodin also doubles as the film's "Quiet Man." "We've co-written a feature-length western as well," Cox said.

"Tim loves westerns," added Goodin.

"I'm a huge western fan," said Cox. "Dave isn't particularly. So that kept us in touch with what would work for both an audience of western fans and also for those who might not be so inclined. It's a great balance."

"I like all genres of films." Goodin countered. "The western is, by the way, the lowest genre on my ladder of favorites." This invited more

laughter from Cox—it became clear that these two enjoy baiting each other and that their partnership, in some ways, benefits from the rancorless bickering between the two of them.

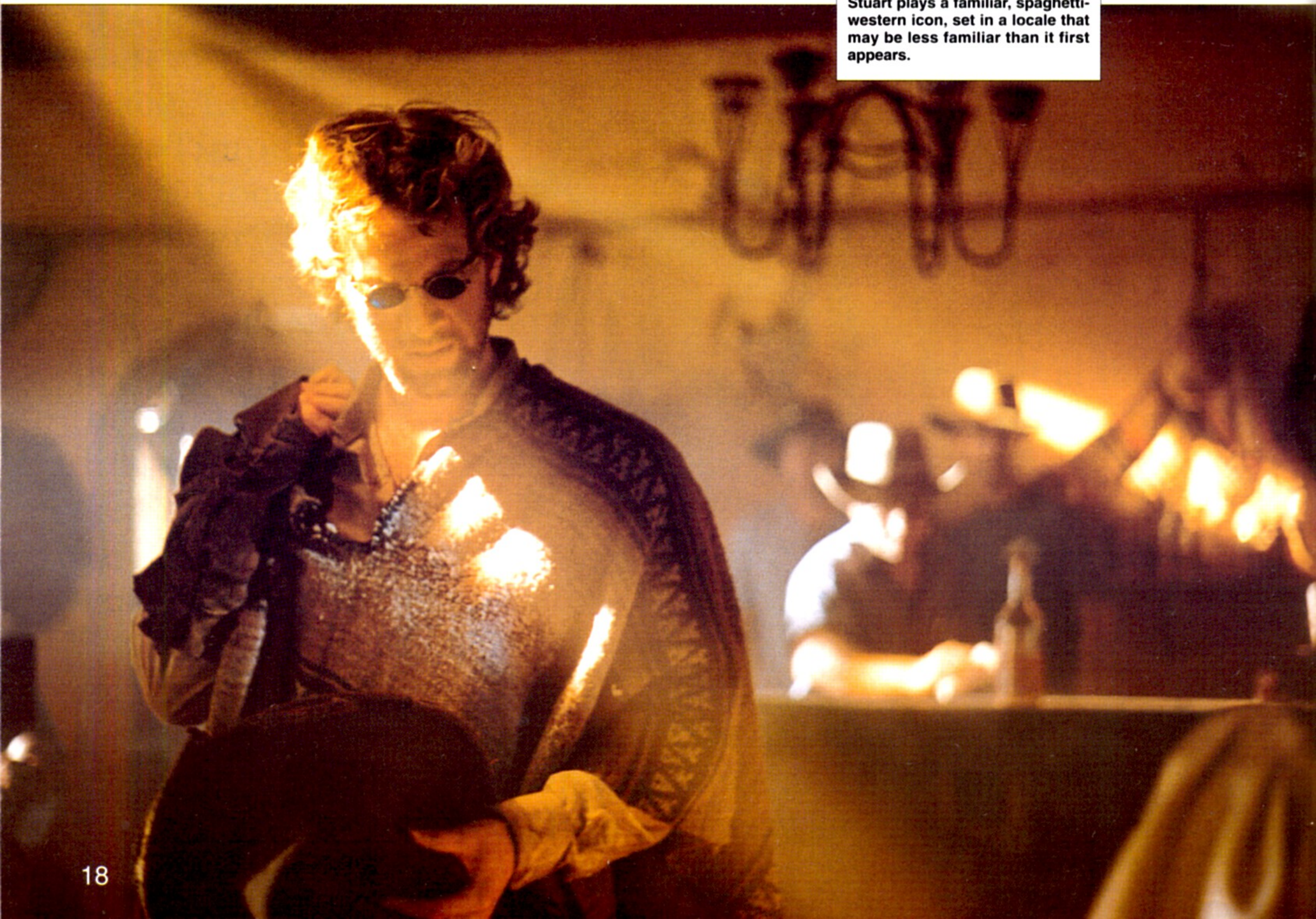
"What makes this project interesting for me is that it made me focus on two genres—science fiction and western—that I had not previously focused on," said Goodin.

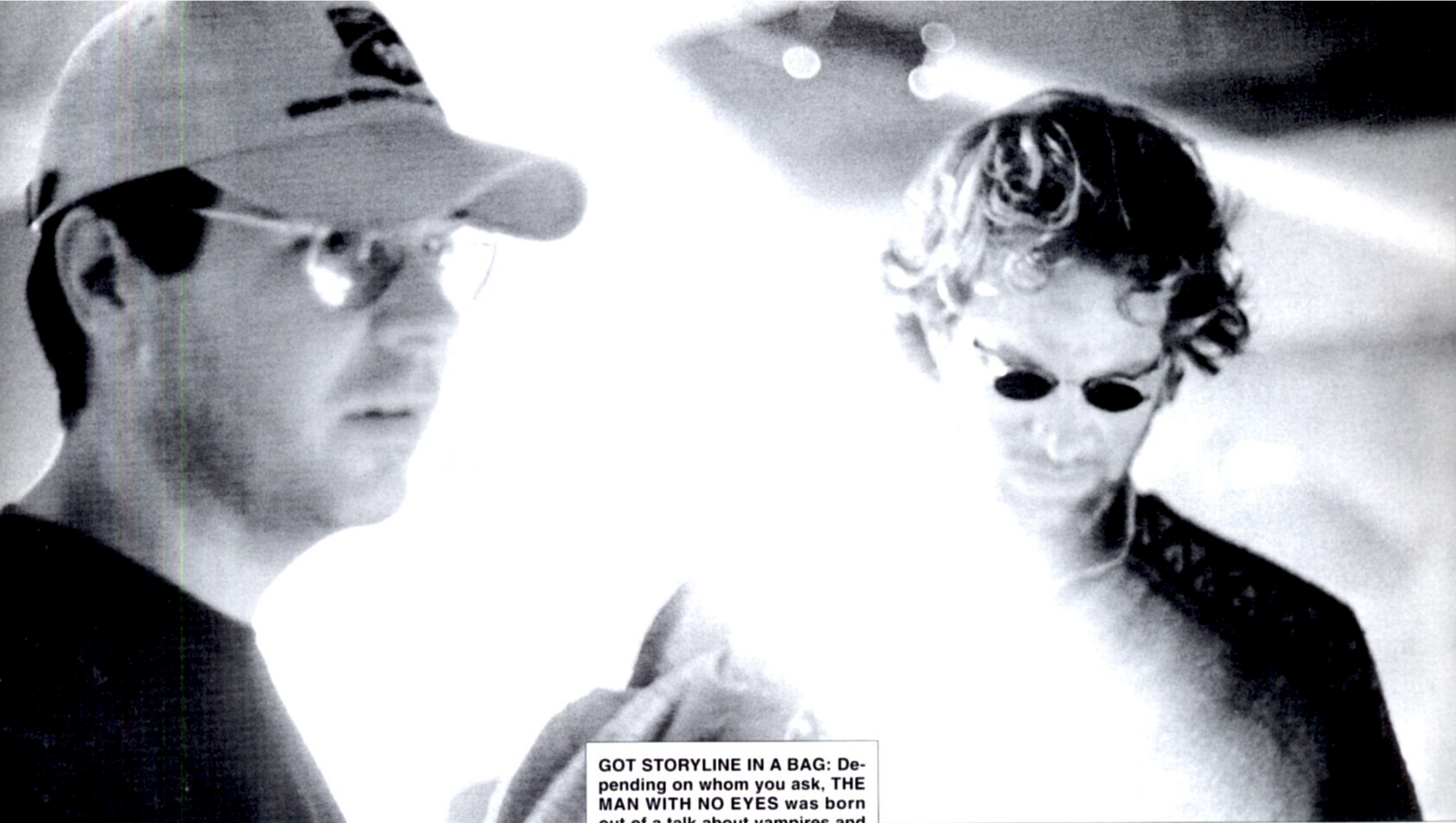
"I'm a huge science fiction fan!" Cox asserted.

It would appear these two love nothing if not mixing genres. Cox described their feature-length western script as "RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK in the Old West. It's trying to create a new look at the genre, in the same way as *THE MAN WITH NO EYES* is, without breaking the conventions of the genre too much."

EXPOSURE's interest in Cox started with a 1950's period piece the director had made for fifty dollars as a student project. After receiving a grant,

THE FUTURE IS COMIN' ON: Mel Stuart plays a familiar, spaghetti-western icon, set in a locale that may be less familiar than it first appears.





GOT STORYLINE IN A BAG: Depending on whom you ask, **THE MAN WITH NO EYES** was born out of a talk about vampires and the medieval period, or while **A FISTFUL OF DOLLARS** was playing on TV. Above: Director Tim Cox with star Mel Stuart.

Cox made a World War I period piece which won awards and also impressed the producers of the show. Cox explained how the Exposure Studios project came about: "Our lawyer arranged for us to speak with [supervising producer] Bill Platt and [associate producer] Mark McCoy. They asked us if we had short scripts to submit. We had written feature-length scripts and I had directed a short film, but we had no short film scripts. So I turned from the phone, looked at Dave, and said into the phone, 'Sure, we have some short film scripts we can show you. How many days can you give us to clean them up?' They said, 'Three days.' I hung up the phone and said to Dave, 'We have three days to write three short scripts.'

"We sat down, we brainstormed ideas, and **THE MAN WITH NO EYES** was written in two and a half hours. We decided to submit three scripts, and **THE MAN WITH NO EYES** was the third one. We thought it would never get made, and sure enough, it was the one they chose."

"I think the reason why neither of the other two scripts we submitted was selected was that they were more like **TWILIGHT**

Z O N E episodes,"

Goodin interjected. "This one was a tougher story to tell in twelve pages. We were sitting around, and the next thing you know we were talking about medieval times and vampires...and somehow we ended up writing a science fiction western."

Or maybe not. **RASHOMAN**-like, Cox instantly offered up a more straightforward rendition of the moment of creation: "Well, we were sitting around thinking up ideas, and **A FISTFUL OF DOLLARS** was playing on the television," said Cox. Uh-huh: Goodin tries to tell a story and Cox puts the kibosh on it. Somewhere between the two versions, the truth rests. Where are Mulder and Scully when you really need them?

Back to **THE MAN WITH NO EYES**. Said Cox, "A stranger enters town, and slowly but surely it is revealed that he has a secret, because he has unearthly or metaphysical-seeming powers. By the end of the movie, two of these characters have a showdown. It's alien gunslings in the old west, with homage to Sergio Leone and Akira Kurosawa."

"What's fun about the film,"

said Titus, "is that it presents itself first as a

western. Then it is slowly revealed that these characters are not from this place, until there's a final showdown at the end."

"The best SF is grounded in reality," said Cox. "You need characters that, whether they be alien or human, possess the qualities that we all can identify with, so that we can latch onto universal emotions and themes with which we can relate."

Genre film fans will be happy to note that Vernon Wells, best known for his portrayal of the outlandish character Wez in **THE ROAD WARRIOR**, plays the villain in the film. "Oh, he is so cool!" said Cox. "When he walked into the audition, I recognized him from that film, and **COMMANDO**, and **INNER SPACE**. I was a little starstruck. Vernon of course was very nice, and he said to me, 'Calm down, it's just an audition.'"

"And I really wouldn't call his character a villain. He's misguided," Cox laughed.

Mel Stewart, a 1992 Olympic games championship swimmer, played the lead. "He's got a really great presence," said Cox. "We think he's a great actor. He

reminds you a little of Clint Eastwood. I'd say his character is an homage to Eastwood's work. Clint, if you're reading this, we love ya!"

Despite all the joshing about the film, it is a drama, not a comedy. "When we first started kicking around the idea for it, we thought about comedy; we thought about something Bruce Campbell could do. But it's hard to instill humor into a fifteen minute film," Goodin said. "We decided to go for that **X-FILES**-type tone after awhile."

"Dave and I have a propensity for comedy, but at the same time I think we approached this subject matter with a lot of respect. It takes the tone of classic westerns, such as the early Sergio Leone film **ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE WEST**. In a way, I'm paying homage to my grandfather, who sat me down on Saturday afternoons and watched all those westerns with me," Cox said.

Cox is happy to have fingers in various pies. He and Goodin would be thrilled to have a foothold in the science fiction world, while still trying to sell their western script. "I guess it would be a great goal to write and make a film in every genre," said Cox. CFQ

THE MAN WITH NO EYES

Exposure Studios

What Started as an Experiment in Bringing Short-Form Storytelling to SF Fans has Become a Production Source in Itself

By Denise Dumars

Short films are often made by aspiring filmmakers; there are a variety of awards given for best short film, including, of course, the Oscar. But where does a film fan see short films, which rarely show up in theatres? If that fan is also a science-fiction fan, he or she can see them on the Sci Fi Channel's groundbreaking series EXPOSURE.

Conceived as a way to showcase short genre films, EXPOSURE debuted in April, 2000. Hosted by actress Lisa Marie, the one-hour series now airs at 11 P.M., Pacific and Eastern time, on Sunday nights.

We sat with Bill Platt, supervising producer for EXPOSURE, and Mark McCoy, associate producer, in the luxurious wheelchairs that furnish the Sci Fi Lab's "operating theatre," (get it?) in Hollywood. This is the home of Exposure Studios, a new facet of the Sci Fi Lab, where many of the Sci Fi Channel's programs are developed. No longer will the show EXPOSURE just show short films from other sources; it will now produce them as well.

"I was hired on EXPOSURE in May of 1999," said Platt. "Basically, I was hired to see if there were enough short films out there to base a show on. I researched that for the

next couple of months: We went to film festivals, film schools, that sort of thing, to see if there were, specifically, enough genre short films to sustain a weekly television series. We were looking for quality as well as quantity. I had come from NYU Film School and so I knew that there were in fact plenty of short genre films—having made some myself—to start with."

The show was, not surprisingly, a hit. "The first season was twenty-six episodes," said Platt. "It got picked up for another season."

EXPOSURE is a unique program, showcasing not only science fiction

short films, but also fantasy, horror, and the just plain unclassifiable.

"For the first season of the show, I was acquisitions coordinator and associate producer of the show. I found most of the films for that season," said Platt. "One of the things that I was intrigued about is what people do when they first start out. I think the short film is an art form in and of itself. It's also a training ground. There aren't really too many short-film professionals out there; they usually go on to longer works."

EXPOSURE also aired early short films made by many famous writers and directors.

"I was interested in going back and finding early work by very established people and airing them as well," Platt said. "We had ELECTRONIC LABYRINTH, which was George Lucas's USC graduate short film; we had Clive Barker's early short films; we had two short films by Alex Proyas; we had Tim Burton's FRANKENWEENIE. All of these people agreed to be interviewed and discuss their early work."

While fans enjoyed and appreciated those films and interviews a great deal, the main purpose of the show was and is to showcase up-and-coming filmmakers. Said Platt, "The show can also be

POSITIVE PRODUCTION VALUES: The challenge Exposure Studios presents to its filmmakers is to create visionary stories with limited means.





A FEW MINUTES TO DAZZLE: Projects like *THE MAN WITH NO EYES* demonstrate Exposure Studios's determination to bring unique visions to television.

viewed as a message from the future of film—who [will] be the next stars of the science fiction film world, or the film world in general?”

How did the show go from finding the short films and their creators to producing its own short films? “Exposure Studios is a fund that’s been set up by the Sci Fi Channel to give opportunities to new directors,” said Platt, “to provide new filmmakers with their first professional opportunity, or an opportunity to make a short film. It’s a way to show off skills in an achievable format. Needless to say, to make a two-hour movie or a pilot for a TV show is a very difficult thing for a new filmmaker to do, so here’s a testing-ground possibility.”

How the audience perceived the show was one factor in the decision. “There was excellent feedback on the show,” said Platt, “so the Sci Fi Channel felt that this was a really good way of finding new talent. We wanted to work with new filmmakers in the situation of actually producing their films. I think that the channel felt that through setting up this fund they could, number one, help some filmmakers and launch some careers; and secondly, I

think that Exposure Studios would allow us to see how these people held up in a difficult situation, which is to produce something of high quality for not a lot of money, and see what the results were.”

A proving ground, in other words. “Obviously, the films are going to air on EXPOSURE. Some of the filmmakers we’re working with have had short films on the show already.”

The first film that Exposure Studios produced is called *THE MAN WITH NO EYES*, made by writer/director Tim Abram Cox and co-writer/partner David Goodin. Best described as a science-fiction western, it was filmed using the cutting-edge technology of the Panavision 24P high-definition camera, the same kind of camera used to film *ATTACK OF THE CLONES*.

THE MAN WITH NO EYES was selected out of a number of script submissions that had been sent to the new studio. “It’s not an absolute mandate that submissions be from those who have already made a short film. But we do expect very high-quality work; the bar is much higher for someone who has not produced

a short. It’s not just, ‘Can you direct?’ but, ‘Can you make an amazing product with next to no funds?’”

Therefore, many of the films aired on EXPOSURE don’t necessarily represent the debut efforts of their producers. “Sometimes it’s their third, their fourth short film, or their master’s thesis film project. It’s an evolution. It’s rare that someone makes an amazing short film the first time out.”

Nevertheless, there is a varying level of quality in terms of production values, and a tremendous variety of genres and subject matter. “I think that one of the things I like about the show is that it’s a smorgasbord of work from emerging film directors,” said Platt. “I think that a film that was shot on Super-8, if it’s really brilliant, is as valid as a film that cost \$100,000 and was shot on 35mm.”

Exposure Studios is now open to submissions. Despite the number of experimental-style films already aired on the show, the films produced by this studio will be more traditionally based in narrative. “We are trying for a little bit

more of a standardization of the overall production values of the short films we

produce. We also feel that we’re looking for films that have a strong narrative, so I would say that work that’s truly non-narrative is probably unlikely to be accepted by us.”

It’s not out of the range of possibility that a promising new filmmaker discovered by this process would be chosen to helm a series or feature-length film for the Sci Fi Channel. “Of all the films we’ve run on the show, certainly someone who made one of those films is going to go on and be important to the science fiction field,” said Platt, as McCoy nodded in agreement.

“I think,” remarked Platt, “that the project’s a lot of fun, because the people involved—both the filmmakers and Mark McCoy and myself—are science fiction fans ourselves.”

“We love science fiction books, films, comics, the whole genre,” McCoy chimed in. “I’d just like to reiterate Bill’s passion for the new project. We both have a love of filmmaking. It all comes from that.”

CFQ

TREK PALOOZA!

VIEWING VOYAGER

*The Goal was to Rejuvenate the STAR TREK Franchise.
Seven Seasons of Triumphs and Failures.*

By Anna L. Kaplan

In 1995, STAR TREK: VOYAGER premiered, the flagship show of the fledgling UPN network. Launched amidst a blaze of publicity, with the first female captain, Kathryn Janeway, played by Kate Mulgrew, the pilot episode was watched by more than twenty million viewers, pulling in a thirteen in the Nielsen ratings. In the debut episode, "Caretaker," Captain Janeway stranded her crew and a group of Maquis in the Delta Quadrant. Seven seasons later, what was left of the group returned to the Alpha Quadrant in the finale, "Endgame." Despite significant erosion of the fan base during the seven years, some nine million people watched the finale. In between, the people making VOYAGER faced a variety of challenges, made many a misstep, and lost literally millions of viewers.

STAR TREK: VOYAGER was created

by TREK honcho Rick Berman, along with Michael Piller, who also helped create DEEP SPACE NINE, and Jeri Taylor, executive producer on THE NEXT GENERATION. The gigantic shadow of THE NEXT GENERATION influenced these people as they imagined their next show; so did the existence and performance of DEEP SPACE NINE. While VOYAGER was being put together, TNG was in its seventh season; DS9, its first. Paramount Television saw that there were enough fans to support two TREK shows at one time, so VOYAGER came into existence to step into the space left when TNG switched from a television show to the latest entry in the TREK feature film franchise. While TNG was considered a success—both critically and in terms of ratings—DS9, especially in the beginning, did not seem to reach as many of the TREK fans as its predecessor. These

realities had a significant impact upon the people creating VOYAGER.

Michael Piller recalled the initial work: "I think that the origin of VOYAGER came about from the very specific influences that we were all feeling, and the studio was feeling, from DEEP SPACE NINE. DEEP SPACE NINE had attempted to carve out a new piece of Gene Roddenberry's universe and explore it up close and personal, putting humans into a natural conflict with aliens and essentially creating a melting pot of alien cultures on one location, forcing these people to learn how to live together. That's essentially the theme of DEEP SPACE NINE. However, as so much else is in this business, the ratings of DEEP SPACE NINE were lower than for THE NEXT GENERATION, and so people set out to explain that.

"The general feeling, I think, and the conclusions drawn—conclusions I don't entirely agree with—was that the reason that DEEP SPACE NINE was not as popular was because it was darker,

and because it was not on a ship. That's really simplifying a long analytical process that was made, but the bottom line is that those were the two leading issues that I think guided the development of VOYAGER."

Piller explained that this in turn led to the choice that VOYAGER would be a ship-based show. He said, "It was clear that the next show was going to be a ship show. I think that that was the right choice. I have absolutely no regrets about that. However, when you look at the reaction that people had to DEEP SPACE NINE, they sort of grumbled, saying, 'Well, it doesn't go anywhere.' The bottom line is, I always felt that the DEEP SPACE NINE critics, the people who said it

ALL'S PEACEFUL... TOO PEACEFUL: The dramatic complications of two adversarial crews joining forces were abandoned early in VOYAGER's first season.



WOMAN POWER: Fans who rejoiced at the casting of Kate Mulgrew as captain of the U.S.S. Voyager expressed ambivalence at the introduction of Jeri Ryan as Seven of Nine. Eventually, the character came to be appreciated for her outsider point-of-view.



doesn't go anywhere, were taking an easy shot at something that seemed obvious, but I don't think it was really at the heart of whatever their problems were. I think essentially STAR TREK audiences wanted the same thing that they had seen before, but would have been the first to criticize it if they had been given it. We did not want just do a duplicate show of THE NEXT GENERATION, either with DEEP SPACE

a source of humor for those who didn't like VOYAGER, but even the cast made frequent reference to it. Tim Russ, who played the all-too-serious Vulcan Tuvok, rewrote the lyrics to the GILLIGAN'S ISLAND theme song, and regaled convention viewers with his version about the VOYAGER cast.

This theme persisted for all of the series' seven years. When Robert Duncan

Genevieve Bujold, who we thought was going to bring a great deal of weight and prestige to the role. She probably would have, except that she just wasn't used to a television kind of schedule. At this point in her career she didn't really want to pick up those pieces."

They then cast Kate Mulgrew as Captain Janeway. It took a number of years, but Mulgrew eventually defined Janeway, and

"With VOYAGER, some people kept saying, 'It's moving in the wrong direction. STAR TREK shouldn't be about coming home.'"

—VOYAGER Creator Michael Piller

NINE or with VOYAGER. We wanted to set out to basically expand the universe that Roddenberry had created—not to change it, but just to explore new parts of it.

"I think essentially the first reaction to anything different is, *I'm a little bit uncomfortable and I don't know why, so I'll pick out the first thing that comes to mind: It doesn't move.* With VOYAGER, we had an oddly similar reaction from some people who said, 'Well it moves, but it is moving in the wrong direction. STAR TREK should not be about coming home. STAR TREK should be about going out and exploring brave new worlds.' Obviously, we wanted to explore the new worlds as much as anybody else, but we just didn't want to keep doing the same thing over and over again. So we set off the Voyager crew to the far reaches of the universe, where they would have to be alone out there. In a sense, that was a return to the original challenge, I think, of STAR TREK's first show [and] the first crew, which felt like there was one ship out there really dealing with extraordinary new challenges. The original crew really had to deal with problems on their own with the imagination and the leadership of the hero, [Captain] Kirk [William Shatner]. I think that's what was essentially in our minds when we sent this crew off to be alone out there, without any contact with Starfleet. It would also force us creatively to come up with new and interesting aliens and problems and things that we had never seen before; in other words, giving us the same creative challenge that Roddenberry had given himself when he started the project."

So VOYAGER would be a ship-based show about a crew propelled to the far reaches of the galaxy, enduring the long journey home. Considered in isolation, it was an interesting creative choice. In the larger context of television culture, though, it bore an uncomfortable resemblance to GILLIGAN'S ISLAND. Not only was this similarity

McNeill (Tom Paris) was thinking about season seven, he said, "We're lost in space, it would be nice to stay lost in space. As soon as Gilligan got back off the island, the show was over."

In assembling the series, one question remained key: Who would be the captain? Piller explained that he and Berman had decided on a female captain even before Jeri Taylor joined the creative team. The studio was not as confident. Recalled Piller, "Of course there was the issue of who was going to sit in the captain's chair. Before Jeri came in, Rick and I said to each other, 'This really has to be a woman. It's the right thing to do, and if we don't do it, we are basically begging a huge question.' It was a decision that was talked a lot about.

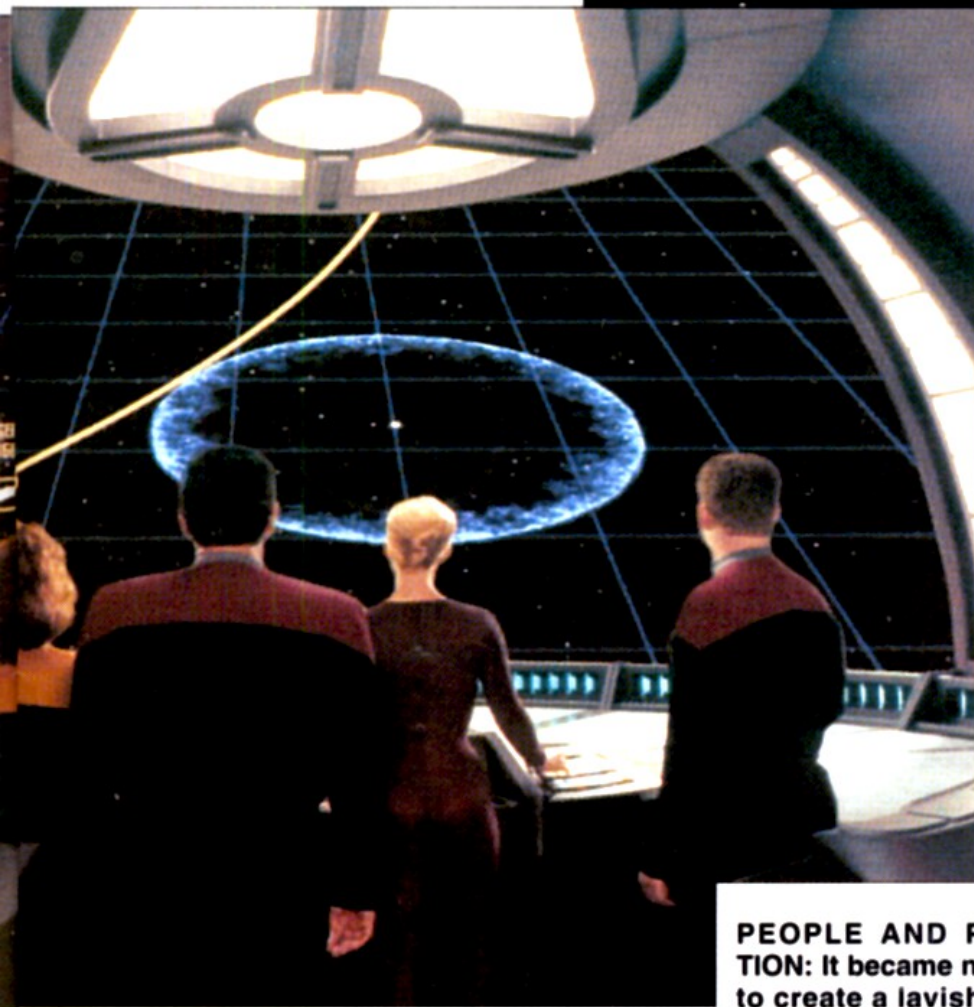
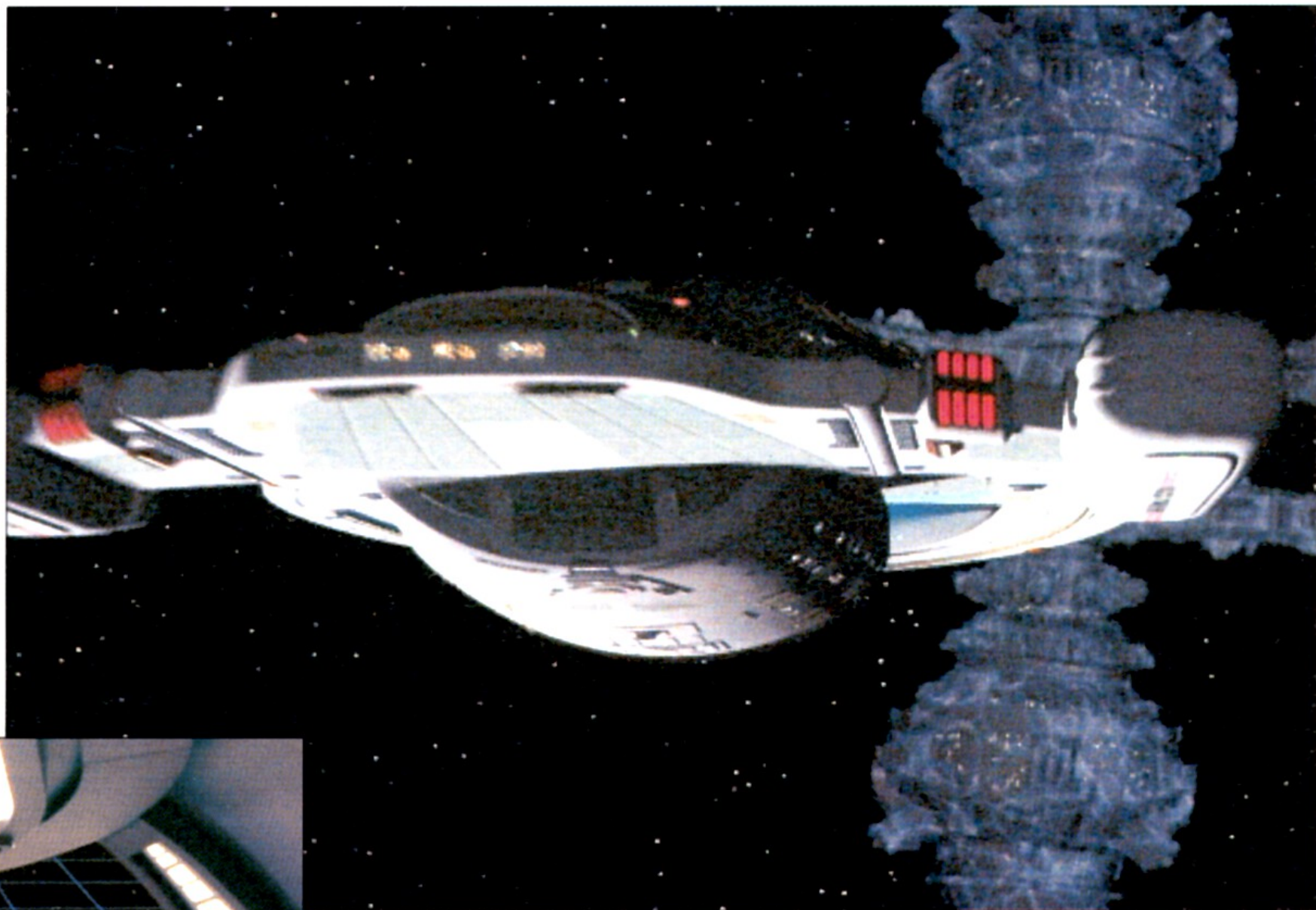
"The studio said, 'Look, if a woman is ultimately what you want, and you find that the best actor we can find is female, that's great. But we want to look at everybody.' We did. We looked at men and women for the role. We had a false start with

on her own terms. While she may not have been to the liking of every viewer, she still was a successful female captain. Noted Mulgrew, "Regarding this particular series, I think it will hold a very important place in STAR TREK lore. The legacy will be an important one: of humanity; our first female; she could do it; she did it. She did it without becoming a man—she was herself. It's really quite a splendid thing, if you think about it."

So VOYAGER had a female captain on a ship lost somewhere out in the galaxy. Next came the decision to mix two crews: traditional Starfleet; and renegade, terrorist Maquis. Recalled Piller, "Essential-



ly, what you have is a situation now where we have created VOYAGER, it's out in the unknown, and you have a wonderful opportunity to put together two crews of outlaws and the Starfleet officers who have been chasing them. However, because of the concerns that DEEP SPACE NINE had created, the decision was made very early on that they did not want a conflicted crew. They did not want this crew to be at each others' throats—they felt that was the weakness of DEEP SPACE NINE.



PEOPLE AND PRODUCTION: It became no big deal to create a lavish environment for Voyager's questing crew (top, from "Riddles;" center, from "Blink of an Eye"). Creating rapport between characters was a taller order. Left: Robert Duncan McNeill as Tom Paris and Garrett Wang as Harry Kim.

It was decided to my regret.

"I am not saying that I was the lone holdout. I think we discussed it and we ultimately came to a consensus which I was part of. But as I look back, I regret that we did not exploit the natural-born conflict between the Maquis and the Starfleet crew more easily. They became homogenized after almost two, maybe three, episodes. So there was a great opportunity to develop character that we missed by making that decision."

So in retrospect, Piller saw the decision to blend the two crews as a mistake. Many critics and viewers agree. This missed opportunity would haunt VOYAGER throughout its run. For one thing, it was not believable that the two groups would join together without more friction and serious

disagreement. Furthermore, lack of conflict was a major factor in making the show weak, forcing the crew to deal with space anomalies and not difficulties with each other. Every now and then, the writers would find a way to bring back that conflict through a mind-control episode, or a flashback, but in a larger sense, the opportunity was lost.

Brannon Braga and Ronald D. Moore were writing partners, working on many TNG episodes together. They wrote the finale of TNG, "All Good Things....," as well as the first two feature films with the NEXT GEN cast, GENERATIONS and FIRST CONTACT. When TNG ended, Moore joined the staff of DEEP SPACE NINE, where he spent many happy, productive

years, helping to make what many consider the finest TREK ever. A long-time fan of TREK, Moore came onto the staff of THE NEXT GENERATION during its crucial season three, going on to become a writer-producer, penning many of the best episodes. Braga went over to VOYAGER its first season. He wrote many of the best VOYAGER episodes, later, with writing partner Joe Menosky. He eventually became VOYAGER's executive producer and head of the writing staff after Jeri Taylor retired at the end of season four. When DS9

finished its run, Braga asked Moore to join him as co-executive producer. This proved to be a terrible mistake for everyone, but it gave Moore a good close look at VOYAGER, from the point of view of someone who had written for every TREK captain.

Ron Moore knows TREK—his point of view is valuable, informed, and to the point. In 1999, after a few months on the VOYAGER staff, he, Braga, and Berman had a falling out over personal and creative issues. The rift was so serious that Moore left TREK forever, to the great dismay of the fans. Moore spoke out about VOYAGER in 1999, adding weight to some of the criticism leveled at the show by those outside.

Said Moore, "I can only criticize VOYAGER so much. I did work on it for a couple of months, and I did study it intensely for a few months leading up to that, trying to get my head inside of it. VOYAGER doesn't really believe in anything. The show doesn't have a point of view that I can discern. It doesn't have anything really to say. It doesn't even really believe in its own central premise, which is to me its greatest flaw. I've said this to Brannon for years, because he and I would talk about the show when it was first invented. I just don't understand why it doesn't even believe in itself. The fundamental premise of VOYAGER is what? A starship chases a bunch of renegades. Both ships are flung to the opposite side of the galaxy. The renegades are forced to come aboard Voyager. They all have to live together on their way home, which is going to take a century or whatever they set up in the beginning. I

thought, this is a good premise. That's interesting. Get them away from all the familiar STAR TREK aliens. Throw them out into a whole new section of space where anything can happen, lots of situations for conflict among the crew. There are a lot of possibilities. But by the end of the pilot, you have the Maquis in those Starfleet uniforms. Boom, we've begun the grand homogenization. Now they are any other ship again."

Not only did the Maquis and Starfleet crew blend quickly together without much conflict, VOYAGER also suffered from the lack of a convincing villain, a feature that science fiction shows like STAR TREK are often defined by. Everyone remembers Ricardo Montalban's Khan from "Classic" TREK and STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN, or the Borg from NEXT GEN and FIRST CONTACT. At the beginning of VOYAGER, the Kazon were meant to be the Delta Quadrant villains. But they were never realized as envisioned by Piller, further weakening the show.

Recalled Piller, "The Kazon were intended to be [like] Los Angeles street gangs. We were living in a time still under the influence of the riots in Los Angeles that terrified us all. It seemed to me an extraordinarily interesting idea to have an area of space that was ruled by anarchy, not just anarchy, but young anarchy. My original vision for the Kazon was that none of them would live beyond the age of twenty because they killed each other off in these continuing battles for territory and superiority. Youth was all they knew. When we got there, we were surrounded by these wild, young, street-gang kind of people who were not technically superior to us. But through their massive numbers and ruthlessness, they became extraordinarily difficult for us to deal with."

Simultaneously with VOYAGER, Piller was also working on a genre show for UPN called LEGEND. This pulled him in two directions. Executive producer Rick Berman, as he had been with all the later TREK series, was involved with VOYAGER from beginning to end. As

Piller went off to work on LEGEND, Jeri Taylor ran the VOYAGER writing staff, which included first season supervising producer Braga, and co-producer Kenneth Biller. Piller recalled, "I had to go off and focus on another series that had premiered at the same time as VOYAGER called LEGEND. The productions of the two series were staggered. I was able to spend the first eleven or so episodes writing scripts

viously we see a lot of young actors who are working on the WB today, so there are some very good people out there. I think that, certainly, those aliens did not live up to our hopes."

No one really liked the Kazon, for one reason or another. VOYAGER kept looking for good villains. Although they found many vicious and aggressive species throughout their seven years in the Delta Quadrant, it took time to find the right adversaries for the crew. Piller, for one, liked the organ-harvesting, phage-infected Vidiian. He noted, "I thought that the Vidiian were quite interesting. I don't know that we used them as much as we might have. There was this strange, early, quick criticism of VOYAGER saying, 'You can never have a villain on VOYAGER that can stay throughout the life of the series, because they are always moving. They are moving away. How can you justify having the Vidiian or the Kazon in season four when they have moved out of that part of space?' My answer to that was that these people are all over that part of space. We can meet anybody we want to there. Of course when the Borg came into the series, they have followed us from here to the end. You don't hear a word complaining that we should have left the Borg behind. I think it's fundamentally an easy criticism that doesn't really hold water when the show works. When you have an alien that is actually working for you, you find ways of keeping them alive."

The two-part episode "Scorpion," written by Brannon Braga and Joe Menosky, which ended season three and started season four, brought the most dramatic changes to VOYAGER. The Borg came in as main villains, and Seven of Nine, played by Jeri Ryan, joined the cast. Before the season four opener, pictures of Ryan in what would become her very famous skin-tight outfit outraged many fans. Once the season started,

though, the reaction changed. Viewers and critics discovered that Ryan was a very good actress. Also, her character was not used in the way people expected. Rather than becoming a sex goddess, she turned into the alien foil for the rest of the cast, especially Janeway. The difficulties of turning a Borg drone back into a human gave the show a natural source of conflict.

Piller noted, "It really wasn't until Seven of Nine came onto the series, which was after I left the day-to-day operation, that you were allowed to see the crew in some conflict. As a result, the stories involving



THE OTHER AUDIENCE: Initially rejected by fans as a cynical attempt to boost ratings, the introduction of ex-Borg Seven of Nine added the alien viewpoint that had become a mainstay of TREK drama.

for the first season of VOYAGER, but then essentially I had to leave a great deal of it to Jeri and Brannon and the other gang. I was seriously involved with the casting of the regulars of VOYAGER. I had no time to participate in the casting of the guest stars. It came back to me that they were not finding any good young actors that they felt could handle the demands. So they said, 'We are just going to make them older guys.' I think we lost what that potential was when we did that.

"I wasn't there, so I don't know what they saw. I just don't know why those actors just were not comfortable in those roles, but apparently they weren't. Yet ob-

her and the general success of the storytelling on the series, I thought, took a huge leap forward because of her arrival. What you had then finally was the opportunity to explore character through conflict, and it was natural, Roddenberry-esque conflict of cultural differences that had to be resolved. I really thought that the show came into focus when Seven of Nine arrived."

Said Braga, who created the character along with Menosky, "Whatever tiny measure of pride that I have, I share with Joe Menosky, because he was really right there in the trenches with me, reshaping the show. I think Joe and I took a somewhat flagging show and infused it with some small semblance of energy, by adding Seven of Nine and reshaping the way we would tell stories. I think that we were all creatively struggling to find VOYAGER's voice. It had a female captain, which was good and unique. But we were struggling to find what it was that made VOYAGER stand out."

Braga added, "Seven of Nine was kind of what was missing all along. Janeway didn't have a foil. Janeway had the Doctor [Robert Picardo], who was very much a Data- [Brent Spiner] or Spock- [Leonard Nimoy] like character, but the Doctor didn't really have a relationship with Janeway. Janeway needed a STAR TREK, sci-fi character. [Those] have always been the bread and butter of the franchise. I think Seven of Nine really helped that. It didn't hurt that the show got a badly needed infusion of sexuality or, shall I say, sensuality. The Borg allowed us to give VOYAGER a great recurring villain. Q [John de Lancie] never quite worked, although to compliment Piller, there was one excellent Q episode about euthanasia ['Deathwish']. Aside from that, Q was a little too soft, the way he was used. But when the Borg came in, you not only got Seven of Nine, but you got a kick-ass villain."

Rumors persisted for a number of seasons that Mulgrew did not get along with Ryan. At the end of VOYAGER's run, Mulgrew insisted that was never true. She said, "We never didn't get along. It's just a difference in approach. I have always been quite clear about it. I think what I felt about that was perfectly understandable, albeit a little disconcerting. I just thought, 'Oh, I wish that we could have pushed through without having to defer to the cosmetic value to bring in the ratings'—her beauty and her figure and all of that. I would say, on principle, I objected, but not to the girl. She certainly didn't damage it, did she? Most would say she enhanced it. That's the way it is."

Episodes focusing on Seven of Nine always raised the ratings, although in general they continued to drift downward. Ryan graced many a magazine cover in her revealing costume. She and Braga became involved romantically, which was public

knowledge by season six. A cyber-stalker threatened both of them, and during season seven she had to go to court to get a restraining order. Seven of Nine did not really get involved with another VOYAGER character until the finale, and certainly storylines never involved using her sexuality. Still, her appearance raised eyebrows as well as ratings.

Moore wrote one VOYAGER episode, sixth season's "Survival Instinct," a story about Seven of Nine and a past experience she had as a drone. Moore recalled some months after the episode aired, "I have a lot of respect for Jeri Ryan as an actress. I think she does a remarkable job, for a character that could come off very one-note. There is a lot going on in those eyes. There is a lot that she can convey with just a look. All that said, how can you really take her seriously in that getup? If you want to posit a future where we wear our sexuality on our sleeves, that's great. That's very much in tune with how Gene Roddenberry saw the future. But to just have Jeri Ryan do it, because Jeri Ryan is voluptuous and gorgeous and appeals to a certain demographic, is ludicrous.

"She does look beautiful—she is a beautiful woman. I don't object to that. Tell me that the audience's eyes aren't watching her walk onto the bridge. Everybody is just supposed to pretend like that is okay. It *would* be okay, but you don't play anyone else like that. The characters don't act that way; they don't wear their sexuality on their sleeve, except her. It's just eye candy with no content.

"It's a disservice to Jeri, because she's the one that has to answer the questions about the costume, and has to defend it. It's the primary characteristic of her character, and that's unfortunate. I just think it's completely unnecessary. The character is a good enough character, and she is a good enough actress, that you don't need to do it, at least not every week."

These concerns were not really addressed during most of VOYAGER's run. VOYAGER's strengths were in its appearance, its stunning visual effects, its high concept episodes, its two-parters. VOYAGER's weaknesses involved the characters, who, until the final season, demonstrated no arcs and built no personal relationships.

VOYAGER did not believe in itself. In the show's original bible, the characters of Neelix (Ethan Phillips) and Kes (Jennifer



RETHINKING ASSIMILATION: Long plagued with a dearth of compelling villains, VOYAGER finally found satisfactory adversaries with the reintroduction of the Borg.

Lien) were lovers. By the time the first season was over, it appeared that they did not even live together, much less have sex. Both characters, different aliens, suffered from a lack of focus and contradictory storytelling. Eventually, for any number of reasons, Jennifer Lien left the show as Jeri Ryan came on board. Phillips, as Neelix, stayed for the entire seven seasons, although many fans disliked his character.

Tom Paris and B'Elanna Torres (Roxann Dawson) got involved early in VOYAGER's run, but for years the relationship was never addressed. This frustrated McNeill and Dawson as much as it did the fans and some of the writers. Moore wrote the story for "Barge of the Dead," an episode that focused on B'Elanna and her beliefs about the Klingon afterlife. He thought such life events would affect the relationship between Tom and B'Elanna. He recalled, "When we were talking about 'Barge of the Dead,' I just remember having these arguments. This should have a big impact on their relationship, [but] it was, 'We don't want to do a show about the relationship. It's not that interesting, and it doesn't really matter anyway.' But if the character is in a relationship, if it actually matters to B'Elanna, and it actually matters to Tom, then something like this that happens to her is going to have an impact on the relationship. You always hear, 'No relationships between the characters. We don't like it. It didn't work with Kes and Neelix. The Tom and B'Elanna thing—well, we don't really care.'"

On the other hand, the Doctor, a one-note character in the pilot script, developed into a remarkable crewmember. Until the arrival of Seven of Nine, he was the Data-like character for VOYAGER, the character who didn't always do things by the Starfleet book, because he was a hologram. No doubt Robert Picardo was to a large extent responsible for the growth of his character, always pitching ideas and acting larger-than-life. But the Doctor was also easy to write for—the writers could break rules with him.

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TREKAPALOOZA!

KATE MULGREW

Hard Personal Choices Had to be Made to Captain the U.S.S. Voyager

By Anna L. Kaplan

Kate Mulgrew, who spent seven years playing the first and only female captain to anchor a STAR TREK series, had a lot of difficulty saying goodbye to a character she took so close to heart, Captain Kathryn Janeway. "I am having mixed feelings, I have to say. I could have predicted this. The problem is, when you are working that hard, you can't really assess how it is going to feel until it ends. I am trying to really reflect on the significance of these seven years. It's a complicated affair—the company, most importantly, people I have grown so fond of, and the work itself, not even to mention my allegiance or my relationship with Janeway, which for an actress like me is a pretty heady affair. A divorce is just not going to happen. So, I am going to have

to find a way to let her go, I think, in a systematic and gentle way. I haven't figured it out yet. I'll let you know if I do.

"I fashioned her pretty much out of nothing. The outline was pretty skeletal when I took the job. What happens over the years, if you are lucky enough to have a character this splendid to play, [is that] a real love affair begins to evolve. Now I am left trying to figure out how you say goodbye, actress to character."

While it is hard now to think of Janeway without Mulgrew, she was not the first actress cast in the role. The initial Captain Janeway was Genevieve Bujold, who left just after beginning production on the series' first episode. After that false start, the executive producers and creators of VOYAGER—Jeri Taylor, Michael Piller, and Rick Berman—went back

to look at other actresses, reportedly including Linda Hamilton, Blythe Danner, and Susan Gibney. They settled on Mulgrew. "It was serendipitous," Mulgrew recalled, "because you know when your competition is tough. I think it was just the final assessment on the part of all the producers; they were looking at it very systematically, very critically almost: 'Who's got the constitution for it? Who's got the record for it? Who looks like it? Who sounds like it? Who's closest?' I think they just said, in the end, 'We think that Mulgrew would probably be the best bet.' But they could have gone any number of ways that day, and I think been satisfied.

"Maybe I say this with a little bit of arrogance, but I say it with truth: I don't think a lot of

actresses could have done it. It's just not for everybody. This is a horse of a different color—you have to be physically strong to begin with, and you have to be very disciplined about the work, and dedicated to it, so you don't start to crumble when the work takes over your life, which it did, quite unexpectedly, too. This has been a veritable masterpiece of choreography, running my private life and my job. It's not just a job. It was a life, a way of life:

very big, and at times very, very tough to walk that line, to satisfy myself on a personal level and to be a good Janeway. That was tough. I am not sure I pulled it off."

Mulgrew landed the role at a time when she really needed work. As a single mother of two young boys, she had to make difficult choices: "First of all, I needed this job badly when I got it. There had been a slow period, and I really did need it. My children were young, I had just been divorced, and when I got it I think I said to myself, 'This is going to be more than just another character. You are going to have to really honor this. You're going to have to go the distance with this one.' I think I have. Now if you want to talk to me about my maternity, a lot of that was in question much of the time, but Janeway got her due."

The experience convinced Mulgrew of the great difficulty of trying to balance her private and work life; being a mother and being an actor. She noted, "When I speak to professional women, I say, 'You know, at the end, I would suggest that you can't have it all, so you better know what it is you really want.' It just is true—it's not rolling the dice any more, women can't afford to do that. They have to pick and choose, I think, quite carefully. I applaud the woman who says, 'I want my career, but I am not going to have children.' To the woman who says, 'I want it all,' I say, 'Really? Do they spell your name G-O-D?'"

"It doesn't work like that.

DUTY NOW FOR THE FUTURE: A single mother, Mulgrew made necessary sacrifices in order to accept the role of Captain Kathryn Janeway.



You race home from work after sixteen hours to crying children who feel bereft; they feel betrayed. Then you try and get them through adolescence. You're knocking yourself out—it's tough.

"On the other hand—and this is probably the bigger truth—I think the work saved me. Go figure that out, but it did, because I could focus on something that I loved. I have always had that ability: Get to work; open the script; okay, now we're in. I can be creative, just putting away the rest of it. That is salvation. Being able to do it every day with this woman who presented me with so many challenges, Janeway, was a great pleasure. So let's make no bones about that. I was a lucky cookie to get her, and I knew that."

Over the years, as Mulgrew and the writer/producers of VOYAGER molded and sculpted Janeway, Mulgrew came to appreciate the character's many facets and colors. What did she like most about Janeway? "Her humanity: The very flaws that could drive one mad about her could also delight one. Her capacity for absurdity, the flip side of which was her capacity for wisdom. Her arrogance, and on the other side of that was her ability to take huge risks. Her growing ability to become philosophical rather than dogmatic. She started out as this Starfleet captain, but then she gets lost in the Delta Quadrant, and she has to really confront herself. Who is she going to be? She has two choices: She can be rigid, by-the-book, Starfleet captain; or she can be a human being, and really take the deeper journey.

"That's what I think we did. I tried, anyway. How does she love? How is she vulnerable? How does she feel in the loneliness of her command? I went as deep as I could with her."

A couple of seventh-season episodes filled in the missing pieces of Janeway. In "Workforce," she finally found love, the catch being that it was in the context of having been kidnapped and partially brainwashed. Mulgrew admitted thinking to herself, "Is Janeway ever going to be able to express herself as a woman? They man-

aged to do it, and they did it without jeopardizing Captain Janeway, since Captain Janeway did not know that she was Captain Janeway. She could feel and behave with impunity towards this man, who I think was beautifully played by James Read. In the end, I'd say I got everything I wanted. That was the one stone left unturned, and we did it."

She added, "That's the essence of Janeway, her ability to sacrifice, with full knowledge that she may never again encounter this. But she is a deeply feeling person, very vulnerable."

On the lighter side, Mulgrew also very much enjoyed the chance during season seven to work again with her friend John de Lancie, who reprised the role of Q in "Q Two." Mulgrew believed that people could see the closeness between de Lancie and herself on-screen. "I think people sense that immediately in my dynamic with John, because you can't really lie about that," she noted. "There is just a joy there and an ease there of a twenty-year friendship. He's a real risk-taker, another consummate actor."

This time, she also got to act with de Lancie's son, Keegan, who played the younger Q. Laughed Mulgrew, "The apple doesn't far fall from the tree, does it? I think his father was very proud of him. This is a pretty excellent kid. It was great fun, and great fun to be able to mentor him a little bit, which I think might be more of a difficulty for his father because of the closeness."

The finale, "Endgame" gave Mulgrew an exceptional opportunity: Mulgrew got to play two roles, Captain Janeway, and the older Admiral Janeway. Said the actress of the finale, "Every aspect of it pleased me. It's beautiful. [It was] very difficult, a lot of motion control, split-screen, highly technical stuff, which is often threatening to the creative process. But I just loved the story, and [was] really

UNEXPECTED COMMAND: Cast at the last hour and confronted with a sketchily delineated character, Kate Mulgrew turned Captain Janeway into a fully rounded person.



determined to do it well. I feel certain that we did.

"I would be so disappointed if it were less than great. We worked so hard—by that I mean [director] Allan Kroeker [and myself]—because we were alone for most of it. We worked so hard. It ended so abruptly, and with so little ceremony, and with no ritual. I was just standing there on the bridge all by myself, shrugged my shoulders and said, 'Well, my heavens, I guess that's it,' and walked off."

Mulgrew will miss her co-stars, a group of actors who in the end grew quite close. She noted, "The company got along beautifully, [which is] very rare. Very rare and, in some cases, true love. I think John Ethan Phillips is probably one of the kindest, most extraordinary men I have ever met. I feel equally about Bob Picardo, both

as an actor and a human being. Robbie McNeill was my neighbor, and we shared a particular kind of fondness, real laughter."

Shortly after this interview, rumors began to surface that Mulgrew would in fact appear as Janeway in the next TREK feature film. In the meantime, she expressed her desire to take time off to spend with her two boys and husband. "I have really missed just boring time with them, sitting around for hours, swimming, talking, walking, just looking at them. If I am smart I will take a few months, maybe longer."

After that, she planned to be off in New York, returning to the theater in a project already in the works. She said philosophically, "We never get all of our wishes. But I think sometimes we get the right ones. It all really comes down to who you love, doesn't it? I think that's it. I am very blessed." CFQ



really hope that people remember those great two-parters that VOYAGER did. We just embraced the two-hour, two-parter thing as something that VOYAGER would do a lot of—little movies. Joe and I wrote seven of them, and they were all pretty good. I am pretty proud of those two-parters. I certainly think ‘Dark Frontier’ hit a pinnacle. ‘Dark Frontier’ was, I think, a shining moment for me personally, just because it was big. It pushed the limits of what we could do on a production level. It utilized Janeway and Seven very well. We were able to give VOYAGER a real epic quality.”

“Dark Frontier” aired during season five, Braga’s first year as executive producer and head of the writing staff. It featured Susanna Thompson as the Borg Queen and told the story of Seven’s parents

the other STAR TREK shows. I give him a lot of credit for changing the look and feel of the show. It has a different sensibility stylistically, even in the storytelling. That’s great, because STAR TREK, I think, needs that fresh breath of air to keep it vital. But, it can’t all be that. It can’t all be flash and sizzle. It has to be about something at some level. It just became about action sequences. How many space anomalies of the week can you really stomach? How many time paradoxes can you do?”

Noted Piller, “The whole idea of exploring space is a metaphor for exploring ourselves. When VOYAGER did that, I think it did that very well. I think Seven of Nine stories gave us some insight into humanity and the meaning of humanity that the series sorely wanted. It had its moments. But when it did the exploding spaceships and space-monsters and so forth, the problem is that that’s what everybody does in science fiction. I think that reduces STAR TREK to being no better or worse than other science fiction shows. I have always encouraged the writers to try and find the human elements, the moral and ethical dilemmas. I think there was less an appetite for that after I left. I think in a sense that there were some people who felt, again trying to explain the ratings issue, that that was an ambition that was too lofty for a broad-based audience. I disagree with that.”

Kenneth Biller, who was with VOYAGER from the first season on, took on the role of co-executive producer for season six, after the departure of Ron Moore. He and Brannon shared responsibilities for the sixth season, and then Braga stepped back to work on developing the next TREK show. Biller’s seventh season brought change. Remarked Michael Piller, “I frankly thought the final season was one of its better ones. There was a great episode [‘Lineage’] about the shape of Torres’s unborn baby that I thought was magnificent.”

When Biller started out the last season, he said that he would try to bring more attention to the characters and their relationships. He said, “It’s the last year of the series. What are the major kinds of arcs for our characters that have been put into motion over the series? How can we, not wrap up everything neatly in a bow, but how can we bring some resolution to the relationships and the character arcs that have been put in motion over the course of the series? For Tom and B’Elanna, we are going to explore that relationship as it proceeds over the course of the season, through the various stages of adult relationships. We are going to be trying to do a similar thing with other characters.”

This meant that Tom and B’Elanna not only got married, but they went through her pregnancy, with her baby being born

While interpersonal relationships languished, large, spectacular catastrophes befell the crew. Braga, along with Menosky, wrote a number of two-part episodes—and even some single episodes—that were epic in scope and amazing for television. He said, “We just really experimented with the format of STAR TREK, and to some degree the format of TV storytelling—in some cases with disastrous results, but in some cases with very good results. I

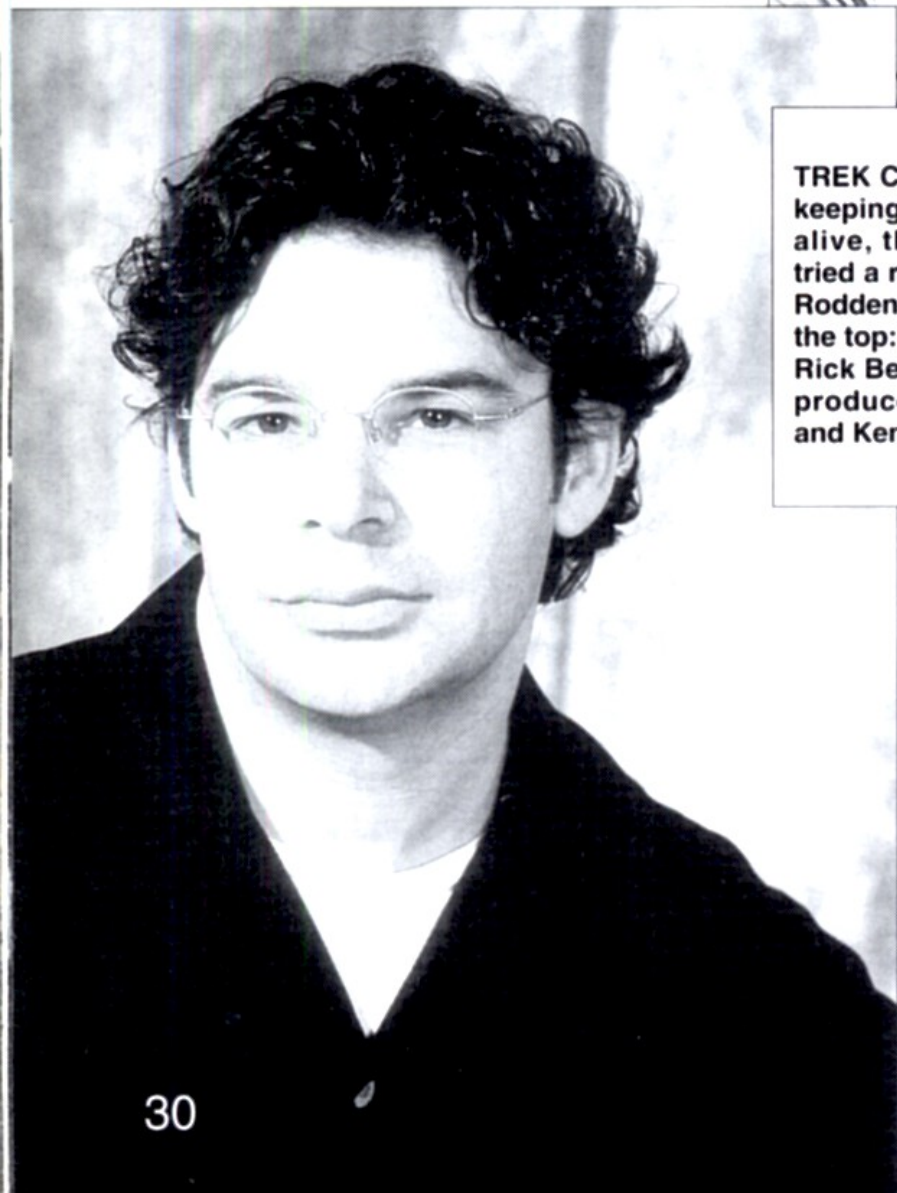


TREK CREW: Charged with keeping the TREK universe alive, the VOYAGER team tried a radical rewrite of the Roddenberry original. From the top: Executive producer Rick Berman; co-executive producers Brannon Braga and Kenneth Biller.

and her initial assimilation, along with a present-time attack on Voyager by the Borg. To give some perspective on the number of viewers this brought in,

“Dark Frontier” received a 4.7 Nielsen rating its two hours. The season premiere, “Night,” got only a 3.7, and the year-five cliffhanger finale received a 3.2. The Nielsen rating for “Dark Frontier” was not beaten by a VOYAGER episode until the finale, “Endgame,” aired and received a 5.5.

Said Moore, “Brannon is very proud of the fact that the show is more action-oriented than the others. It’s faster, it’s stylistically a little more daring than



during the finale. Neelix left Voyager before the end, going to the aid of a colony of Talaxians, and also finding love. Chakotay (Robert Beltran) and Seven started dating, and the audience learned that, in one future, they married. Janeway got the ship home in two different timelines. The characters grew during the last season, and the audience could see how they had changed over the seven years.

However, at the same time, the ship was getting closer to the Alpha Quadrant, and even more episodes linked VOYAGER to THE NEXT GENERATION, and to Earth. This trend started early. In many ways, VOYAGER seemed to want to be THE NEXT GENERATION. Perhaps, as Piller noted, in some respects, that is what the fans wanted as well. Said Moore during season four, "At its heart, VOYAGER secretly wishes it was NEXT GENERATION. It really wants to be back in the Alpha Quadrant—just let us be normal STAR TREK. Voyager is on the other side of the galaxy. On the other side of the galaxy they have already run into some alien race recreating Starfleet Academy. They've run into Ferengi, Romulans. Already it doesn't feel like they are that far away from home."

When communication was established with Starfleet via the MIDAS



BACK IN CIVVIES: Almost unanimously, the cast members of STAR TREK: VOYAGER look back at the seven-year mission as a positive experience.

array in sixth season's "Pathfinder." Voyager was no longer completely cut off from the Alpha Quadrant. Almost entire episodes took place in the Alpha Quadrant, with guest stars Marina Sirtis as Deanna Troi and Dwight Schultz as Reginald Barclay. These two actors often commented that coming to work on VOYAGER felt like working on THE NEXT GENERATION. Even though Biller said that they were not sure until the very end that Voyager would make it home in the finale, in some ways they had already reached home in sixth season. Once they could get instructions or reactions from Starfleet, they were no longer alone in the Delta Quadrant.

Piller summed up his feelings, saying, "I thought VOYAGER was less focused over the years, but certainly had fine moments, and certainly is a proud achievement for everybody involved with it. But I guess what it all comes down to is that STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION was a phenomenon. It was the only show of its type on at the time. By the time you had DEEP SPACE NINE and VOYAGER, you had reruns of all these shows running. You had an all-new show running twice a week. You had science-fiction shows on cable and syndication and network, and the science-fiction pool is a fairly narrow audience to begin with. It's an extraordinarily loyal and smart audience, and it's one that advertisers really want, but everybody came after the STAR TREK audience. I think we started being not only in

competition with other people but in competition with ourselves and our own reruns. I think that the fact that the franchise has been on the air on television now for, what, twelve years, has a lot to do with it. I think there was a certain chemistry on THE NEXT GENERATION—brought in large part by the casting of Patrick Stewart as the anchor man, with the great work by everybody but most particularly Brent Spiner—that it was just hard to recreate. There was a certain chemistry on DEEP SPACE NINE that I thought worked very well as well. But again, for whatever reason, audience just did not gravitate to that as much as THE NEXT GENERATION. I think DEEP SPACE NINE, frankly—because of the great story telling...week after week on that series—will be discovered over time, the same way the original STAR TREK was. I think VOYAGER has held its own."

Biller, who brought the show to its final end said, "I am just proud of the show and I am very proud of this last season. I think that we had a very high production value this season and I just hope that people think that we told good stories. If people think that [the] show had some good stories, then I think that I must have done something right."

What will make people remember VOYAGER? Said Braga, "I look back at that show, and there were some really good episodes. Maybe I am just being biased, but I think, episode for episode, there were just as many outstanding VOYAGERS as there were outstanding NEXT GENERATIONS, even in the first season. VOYAGER was a very consistent show, in terms of putting out very good episodes of STAR TREK. I am not saying there weren't some stinkers. I am not saying we didn't struggle to find Janeway's character, but there were plenty of good episodes in there, very high-concept stuff." CFQ



CURIOUS REUNION: The reintroduction of Dwight Schultz as Reginald Barclay struck a chord with NEXT GEN loyalists, but steered VOYAGER further from its original concept.

VOYAGER SEASON SEVEN

EPISODE GUIDE

By Anna L. Kaplan

UNIMATRIX ZERO PART II ★★★

10/04/00. Stardate 54014.4. Production #247. Teleplay by Brannon Braga & Joe Menosky. Story by Mike Sussman and Brannon Braga & Joe Menosky. Directed by Mike Vejar.

"Last time on STAR TREK: VOYAGER," Seven learned about Unimatrix Zero, a place in cyberspace where one-in-a-million drones can experience individuality while regenerating. At the end of "Part I," B'Elanna Torres, Janeway, and Tuvok allowed the Delta Flyer to be destroyed by a Borg cube, and themselves assimilated. As Seven goes to Unimatrix Zero to help the individuals fight against invading drones, Janeway plans to deploy a nanovirus in the cube, which will allow the individuals to retain their memories when they are not regenerating.

Said Braga, "One of my favorite scenes is when the Queen has Janeway's projection in her chamber and the Queen starts blowing up any cube that has a freedom fighter on it. She's willing to kill millions just to find the few thousand, which is a great dilemma for Janeway. It's classic STAR TREK."

Said executive producer Kenneth Biller, "I think it was a really interesting concept that had a lot of potential. I think that 'Part I' was pretty confusing. We tried in 'Part II' to clarify some stuff that was going on, and came up with a few surprising twists and turns. Hopefully it will feel satisfying as a two-parter."

"If I die...everything I have achieved as an individual will be lost."

—Seven of Nine

IMPERFECTION ★★★

10/11/00. Stardate 54129.4. Production #248. Teleplay by Carleton Eastlake and Robert Doherty. Story by Andre Bormanis. Directed by David Livingston.

Icheb (Manu Intiraymi) and Seven say goodbye to the other ex-Borg children who have found family. When Seven cries, she thinks her ocular im-

plant is malfunctioning. The Doctor finds a problem with her cortical node. As he is running tests, Seven collapses.

The Doctor tells Janeway that Seven's body is rejecting her Borg implants because her cortical node is destabilizing. She will die when the node fails. As Seven tries to deal with this, Janeway goes on a frantic quest to find a cortical node.

Said Biller, "I think it was a very moving episode. The character of Icheb has really been a boon to us, because he allowed us to really explore another dimension for Seven, and to give her another relationship that was

After a talk with Neelix, though, she decides to become Tom's partner on the Flyer.

Said co-producer Bryan Fuller, "'Drive' was Mike Taylor's opus. Mike wanted to do DEATH RACE 2000 for quite some time. Finally we sat down and figured out how to do an Olympics-type event. We came up with a goodwill event idea to do this episode."

Fuller also noted that "Drive" was actually filmed before "Imperfection," and that careful viewers will note the wedding rings on Tom and B'Elanna in the previous episode.

Cyia Batten was one of the actresses who played Ziyal, Gul Dukat's daughter on DS9.

"Someone on board is responsible, and I intend to find out who it is."

—Tuvok

REPRESSION ★★★

10/25/00. Stardate 54101. Production #251. Teleplay by Mark Haskell Smith. Story by Kenneth Biller. Directed by Winrich Kolbe.

Teero (Keith Szarabajka), a Bajoran, makes some kind of communication with Tuvok, Chakotay, and B'Elanna, talking about the time of

Chakotay with a mind-meld. During meditation, Tuvok sees Teero and re-experiences the attacks. He tells Janeway he is guilty. Even in the brig, and under questioning from Janeway, he has trouble resisting Teero's control.

Biller said, "'Repression' is a really fun techno-thriller: 'What [would happen] if Tuvok is investigating a mysterious crime and he discovers that the criminal is him?' That is just a great one-liner that I said to myself, and then started to figure out what could it be."

Fuller added, "Ken had this story that he wanted to do several seasons ago—what we had basically was THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE, which STAR TREK has done before. In fact, there is hardly a sci-fi series that hasn't.

"We thought, *How can we do this episode and make it interesting and fresh?* I thought it would be interesting if Tuvok was 'Maquis Mary,' as opposed to Typhoid Mary, and was re-infecting the Maquis crewmen with their old, righteous political agendas."

"When you look at your patient lying there, you have to ask yourself, 'What can I do? What must I do?'"

—The Doctor

CRITICAL CARE ★★★

11/01/00. Stardate not given. Production #250. Teleplay by James Kahn. Story by Kenneth Biller & Robert Doherty. Directed by Terry Windell.

An alien named Gar (John Kassir) kidnaps the Doctor and takes him to a hospital complex. Gar convinces the hospital administrator Chellick (Larry Drake) to buy the Doctor, who soon discovers that patients are not given the care they need. The Allocator, a computer, assigns numbers to the patients based on their contributions to society. The poor can't get medical treatment. On red level, the Doctor watches patients die who could be saved. But on blue level, Dr. Dysek (Gregory Itzin) is able to give "productive members of society" what they need and more. The Doctor is horrified and struggles to find a way around the system.

Biller said this was one of his



ABOVE: "Unimatrix Zero" RIGHT: "Inside Man"



really an emotional one for her. He adds that to a lot of episodes, but that episode in particular."

"It's time I faced facts, Neelix. Tom and I just don't belong together."

—B'Elanna Torres

DRIVE ★★1/2

10/18/00. Stardate 54058.6. Production #249. Written by Michael Taylor. Directed by Winrich Kolbe.

Harry Kim (Garrett Wang) and Tom are in the newly rebuilt Delta Flyer. They meet up with an alien woman, Irina (Cyia Batten), who invites them to join a big race event meant to celebrate peace in the region. B'Elanna has saved holodeck rations so that she and Tom can have a romantic getaway. When Tom forgets about this because of the race, B'Elanna almost gives up.

awakening. Soon after, Tom and B'Elanna discover the body of Tabor (Jad Mager), a crewman and former Maquis, unconscious from microfractures of the cranium.

Soon, other ex-Maquis suffer the same injury. Tuvok begins an investigation, but is himself seen attacking



I COMPUTE, THEREFORE I AM: The Doctor is forced to confront the moral complexities of living as a holographic entity in "Flesh and Blood."

favorites: "We try to ask a lot of questions without coming down on one side or the other. 'What do you do?' is a question that medical ethicists wrestle with: 'What do you do when withholding treatment from someone is going to cause their death, but may result in saving the lives of many others? How do you answer that question in a way that you can live with?' That's what the Doctor had to struggle with in that episode."

"I think with a little teamwork we can pull off one more miracle and take Voyager home."

—Barclay (Dwight Schultz)... or is it?

INSIDE MAN

★★★

11/08/00. Stardate 54208.3. Production #252. Written by Robert Doherty. Directed by Allan Kroeker.

The crew of Voyager is expecting a data stream from Pathfinder. This time, something big comes through: a hologram of Reg Barclay (Dwight Schultz). He says there is a way home through making a geodesic fold and

connecting it with a similar fold in the Alpha Quadrant.

All the Voyager crew has to do is modify the shields and get some inoculations. As the crew, with some trepidation, makes the modifications, the real Reg Barclay, in San Francisco, wonders why his hologram didn't get through the data stream, and enlists the aid of a vacationing Deanna Troi (Marina Sirtis) in convincing Starfleet that something is wrong.

Billar said that they really wanted to keep Pathfinder and Barclay going during the last season. He explained, "That was an episode where Barclay really was the protagonist. I loved the gag of the Barclay hologram being able to imitate other members of the crew. That started as a comic beat and became something much more sinister. It was great to see Troi again. We got outside and went and shot on the beach, and it looked great."

Fuller said, "It might have been a

little more interesting to have Deanna Troi and Barclay on their own adventure. One thing that I pitched out was to

have them infiltrate the Ferengi black market. That way we could see Deanna Troi in a different role. Every time we see her, we see her as a counselor. If I was Marina Sirtis and I had to come back to STAR TREK and spout '80s pop psychology, I wouldn't be looking forward to it as much as if I had something a little more fun to do. But we made it more of a personal story with Barclay, as opposed to an adventure story with the two of them."

"You became sexually aroused in my body!"

—Seven of Nine to the Doctor

BODY AND SOUL

★★★1/2

11/15/00. Stardate 54238.3. Production #255. Teleplay by Eric Morris and Phyllis Strong & Mike Sussman. Story by Michael Taylor. Directed by Robert Duncan McNeill.

While out in the Flyer, Seven,

Harry, and the Doctor are attacked by the Lokirrim, a lifeform who consider it criminal to transport photonic lifeforms. They attempt to deactivate the Doctor, but only find Seven and Harry aboard, because Seven has managed to download the Doctor into her cybernetic matrix. He controls her body for the time being.

Jeri Ryan gives an astonishingly good performance as the Doctor inside of Seven. While he is in the driver's seat, so to speak, Seven gorges, gets drunk, finds herself attracted to Jaryn (Megan Gallagher), even as Ranek (Fritz Sperberg) makes a pass at Seven. Said Fuller, "We had a freelance writer write ['Body and Soul'], and then Phyllis Strong and Mike Sussman came in to rewrite it and did a fantastic job. That episode had a certain levity to it that I think was quite nice. Jeri was amazing; she nailed Bob Picardo. The episode was either going to succeed or fail on her performance. I think because her performance was so great, the episode was a success."

"If we were back home, I'd be a lieutenant by now, maybe even a lieutenant commander."

—Ensign Kim

NIGHTINGALE ★★1/2

11/22/00. Stardate 54274.7. Production #256. Teleplay by Andre Bormanis. Story by Robert Lederman and Dave Long. Directed by LeVar Burton.

While Voyager lands on an uninhabited planet for maintenance, Kim, Neelix, and Seven set out in the Flyer, looking for dilithium. They come upon a battle between a de-cloaking Kraylor ship and its attackers, the Annari. When the heavily damaged Kraylors send out a distress call, Harry goes over to help, and discovers that all of the experienced officers aboard the ship are dead. The passengers, led by Loken (Ron Glass), beg for more aid in piloting the ship home, saying they have medical supplies to deliver. Harry decides to help them, unaware that Voyager meanwhile has entered into a trade agreement with the Annari.

Said Biller, "Kim was dealing with the glass ceiling of being the



ABOVE: "Imperfection"

"There is nothing inherently violent about holodeck technology. It's what the Hirogen did with it that got them killed."

—Chakotay

FLESH AND BLOOD ★★★

PART I: 11/29/00. Stardate 54315.3. Production #253. Teleplay by Bryan Fuller. Story by Jack Monaco and Bryan Fuller & Raf Green. Directed by Mike Vejar. PART II: 11/29/00. Stardate 54337.5. Production #254. Teleplay by Raf Green & Kenneth Biller. Story by Bryan Fuller & Raf Green. Directed by David Livingston.

Voyager gets a distress call from a Hirogen space complex, where Hirogen have been attacked by what ap-



but his ego got in the way."

"In other words, I am going to choose to help strangers at the expense of our own people?"

—Janeway to Chakotay

SHATTERED ★★★

1/17/01. Many stardates—one is 49624. Production #257. Teleplay by Michael Taylor. Story by Mike Sussman & Michael Taylor. Directed by Terry Windell.

Chakotay is with the Captain when an anomaly rocks Voyager. Trying to stabilize the warp core, Chakotay gets hit by a surge, and is discovered injured by B'Elanna. She transports him to sickbay, where it's discovered that his body is out of temporal sync. The Doctor gives Chakotay a serum to align him into one time frame. But the Doctor is from the past, before he got his mobile emitter. When Chakotay goes to the bridge, he finds the Starfleet crew before their first mission. Janeway tries to arrest him as a Maquis spy. He gets away because only he can pass through the temporal barriers. In engineering, Seska (Martha Hackett) and the Kazon hold the ship.

Said Fuller, "I think that's one of Mike's

best scripts of the season. We thought, 'What are the fun events that we want to see from VOYAGER's past?' We wanted to see Chaotica again; we wanted to see some of the Maquis stuff. Who are the villains? We wanted to see Seven of Nine as a Borg. We wanted to see Seska. 'Shattered' was definitely a fan favorite."

CRITICAL CHOICES: The Voyager crew will either succumb to a culture of survival or rise above it when they become trapped in "The Void" (left). Right center: Nuptuals aired out-of-sequence in "Drive."

pear to be Starfleet officers. Janeway sends an away team into a forested area, where many dead Hirogen are found. Seven realizes that the whole complex is really a modified holodeck. The Hirogen have been using it, with the safeties off, to hunt prey based on the holodeck technology Janeway gave them years previous in the "The Killing Game." The sole survivor, Donik (Ryan Bollman), says the holograms have malfunctioned and gotten away on a Hirogen ship.

Said Fuller, "Jack Monaco pitched a story that was basically that very clean, clear, simple concept of the holograms being oppressed and fighting back against their oppressors. When I sat down and wrote 'Flesh and Blood

ensign on the ship. There is no room to move up. One of the things he always wanted to do was to captain a ship. What would happen if he got that experience? Would he really be ready for it? I think that is something that is also resonant for a lot of people. When you work as a subordinate, you often think, 'If I could only be in charge, I could do that job so much better.' Then when you are really in charge, you see that the job isn't as easy as you thought it was."

"B'Elanna, I am never going to leave you...Our daughter is going to be perfect just the way she is."

—Tom Paris

LINEAGE

★★★

1/24/01. Stardate 54452.6. Production #258. Written by James Kahn. Directed by Peter Lauritson.

Seven weeks pregnant, B'Elanna passes out in engineering. When the Doctor detects a correctable potential spinal curvature in her fetus, he tells B'Elanna and Tom that he can fix it with genetic modification. He shows them a holographic projection of what their daughter will look like: She will have Klingon forehead ridges. The revelation prompts B'Elanna to recall a camping trip she took with her father, John Torres (Juan Garcia), where she was teased for not being able to fit in with humans.

Said Fuller, "We knew that we wanted to do an episode with B'Elanna genetically manipulating her baby. The trick was the backstory. It went from different versions where B'Elanna had killed a fellow child when she was [young] and was feeling guilt about it. That was very similar to something they had done on DEEP SPACE NINE with Worf, and so we steered clear of that. Then there was a bit of violence where she lashed out at her father, threw a rock and hit him in the head. We thought that was too extreme. We went for a more personal dynamic with B'Elanna and her father, and found B'Elanna's fear of being rejected, not by her father or other people, but by her husband."

"That was a surprisingly good episode, just because there was a maturity to it that we don't always have in STAR TREK. The banter between the characters was real. I think that episode pulled off the personal dynamics between the crewmen much better than many of our episodes. It's a testament to James Kahn's writing."

"Killing is wrong, no matter who is doing it."

—The Doctor

REPENTANCE

★★1/2

1/31/01. Stardate not given. Production #259. Teleplay by Robert Doherty. Story by Mike Sussman & Robert Doherty. Directed by Mike Vejar.

When Janeway rescues a group of prisoners and their jailers, the Voyager crew find themselves in the middle of controversy over capital punishment. Warden Yediq (Rim deZarn) has a group of convicted murderers on their way to execution. One injured prisoner, Iko (Jeff Kober), is beamed directly to sickbay, and is thwarted when he tries to take Seven hostage. Iko's jailers beat him up. The

Doctor uses Seven's nanoprobes to heal Iko's severe head trauma, and when Iko awakens, his behavior has changed. Not only is he polite, but he suddenly starts to feel guilt for the murder he committed. The Doctor realizes that the nanoprobes have fixed a congenital defect in Iko's brain—the condemned criminal now has a conscience.

Said Biller, "'Repentance' was inspired by the Carla Faye Tucker case in Texas, a woman who committed a brutal crime [and was] sentenced to

SYNCHRONICITY: Voyager slips out of warp in "Nightingale" (right), while time slips out of joint in "Shattered" (below).



death. During her time on death row, [she] underwent a profound religious conversion and claimed that she was no longer the person who had committed the crime twenty years ago. Supporters were arguing that she should not be put to death, because she wasn't the same person. Is it possible to change that much? This being science fiction, we found a wonderful twist on that which was the guy who physiologically does make a transformation. Is he responsible or isn't he? We always want to



NEVER ASSUME: A crisis of identity drives "Workforce" (above), while Paris fights against the co-opting of his child in "Prophecy."

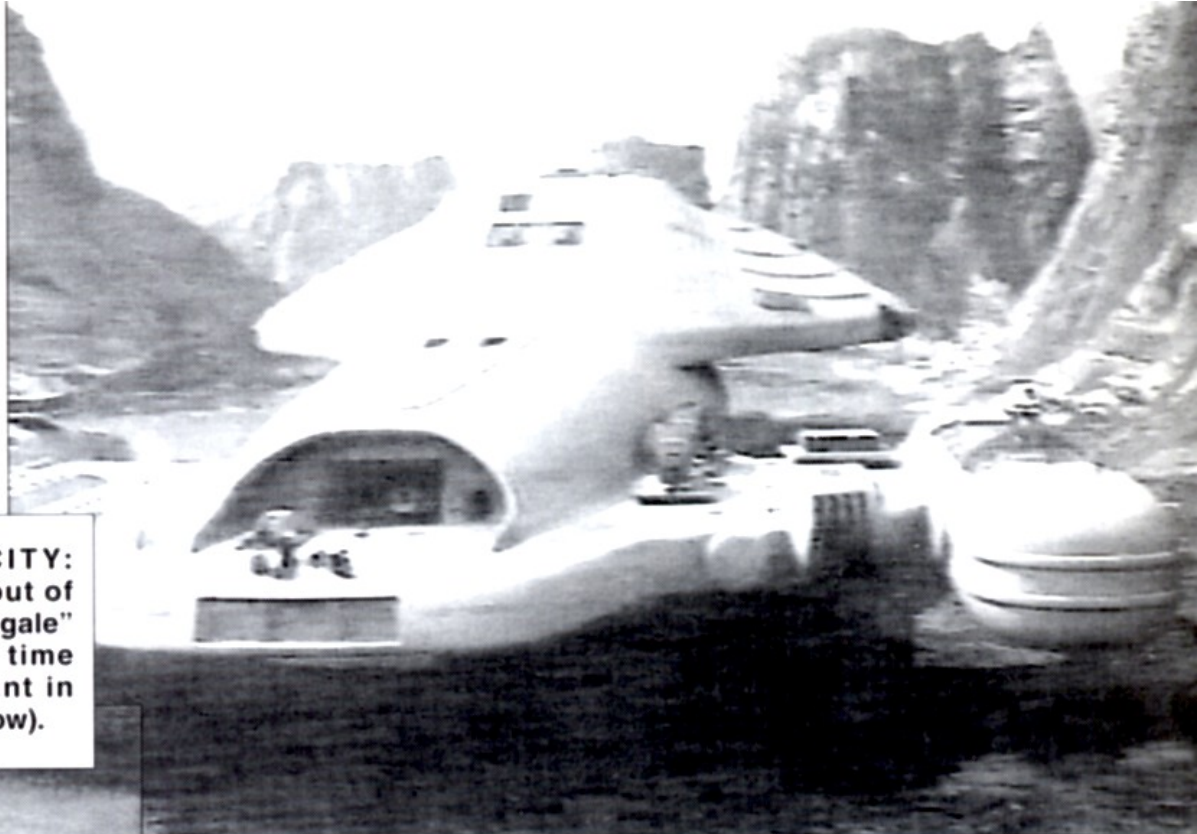
PROPHECY

★★1/2

2/07/01. Stardate 54518.2. Production #260. Teleplay by Mike Sussman & Phyllis Strong. Story by Larry Nemecek & J. Kelley Burke and Raf Green & Kenneth Biller. Directed by Terry Windell.

Voyager comes under attack by an old Klingon ship. Led by Captain Kohlar, the Klingons are on a generational vessel that has been travelling for a hundred years. They don't believe the Empire and the Federation are at peace. When Janeway offers to let Kohlar inspect the Khitomer Accords, he comes aboard Voyager and sees a pregnant B'Elanna.

make it resonant for one of our characters, so it really became about Seven's desire to expiate her own guilt over the sins she had committed as a Borg. Is she the same person that she was then? In fact, she isn't anymore, but does that make her no longer responsible for the things that she did? I thought that was a very thought-provoking episode."



"The scroll said...we would find the Kuvah'Magh, the savior of our people...I believe the Kuvah'Magh is the unborn child of B'Elanna Torres."

—Kohlar (Wren T. Brown)

Kohlar and the other Klingons overload their own warp core, and Janeway is forced to beam the Klingons to Voyager. The Klingons tell the captain that they are following the writings of a sacred scroll, which tells of a person in a distant part of the galaxy that they are meant to follow. Kohlar believes that B'Elanna's child is that savior, the Kuvah'Magh.

Said Biller, "We bought a story



from Larry Nemecek [author of *The Next Generation Companion* and editor of the *Star Trek Communicator*], about running into a generational Klingon ship in the first season, and we never did it. Suddenly it occurred to me that this would be a good time to do it—Klingons are very popular characters. Then it hit me one morning that maybe they are religious fanatics. Maybe they believe that B'Elanna's unborn baby is their Messiah. What would that be about?"

Added Fuller, "The child being a chosen one was something that we came up with early on. Ken came up with the disease, that they were dying from this mutant strain of something in their Klingon DNA. That's what we were looking for all along, was a way for the baby to actually be a savior, but not in a conventional way."

"If we share what we have, instead of hoarding it, we might find other people willing to do the same."
—Captain Janeway

THE VOID ★★1/2

2/14/01. Stardate 54553.4. Production #261. Teleplay by Raf Green & James Kahn. Story by Raf Green & Kenneth Biller. Directed by Mike Vejar.

Voyager gets sucked through a funnel into an anomaly in which no matter exists except for the other starships that have also been drawn inside. Immediately, alien ships attack, and one vessel steals critical amounts of food and fuel. General Valen (Robin Sachs), who has observed the battle, offers to give the crew tactical data on the worst predators in the void, in exchange for photon torpedoes. With no escape possible, the crew of Voyager is faced with the prospect of either scavenging successfully or dying. Janeway is determined to find another way to survive.

TREK fans may recognize Fantome, the mute alien rescued from a looted ship: He's Jonathan Del Arco, otherwise known as Hugh, the individual Borg from THE NEXT GENERATION. The diverse assortment of aliens seen or mentioned in this episode cover the gamut of VOYAGER's history, reaching as far back as the Turei from "Dragon's Teeth."

Said Fuller, "That was a pitch that Raf Green got, that he brought in and was very excited about. It was basically to put Janeway in a situation where she had to assemble her own federation to survive."

"We don't belong here. This isn't right."
—Tuvok

BREAKING BARRIERS: The disastrous legacy of a well-meaning act forms the background of "Friendship One" (right). Survival hinges on finding value in the seemingly valueless in "Natural Law" (below).

WORKFORCE ★★★1/2

PART I: 2/21/01. Stardate 54584.3. Production #262. Written by Ken Biller & Bryan Fuller. Directed by Allan Kroeker.
PART II: 2/28/01. Stardate 54622.4. Production #263. Teleplay by Kenneth Biller & Michael Taylor. Story by Kenneth Biller & Bryan Fuller. Directed by Roxann Dawson.



DUALITIES: Father and son actors play father and son immortals in "Q Two" (above). The crew is beside themselves in "Author, Author" (right).

On an alien planet, Kathryn Janeway reports to her new job, monitoring the primary reactor coils of the city's main generator. Happy at her work, she soon meets Jaffen (James Read), but is cautioned by efficiency monitor Annika Hanson against fraternization. Meanwhile, Tom Paris finds a job at a nearby bar often filled with off-duty workers, including a laughing Tuvok, and a pregnant, lone B'Elanna. When people are given an-

ti-radiation shots at work, Tuvok panics, and has a flashback where he sees himself and Janeway in Starfleet uniforms, injured, and being treated with some kind of brainwashing device.

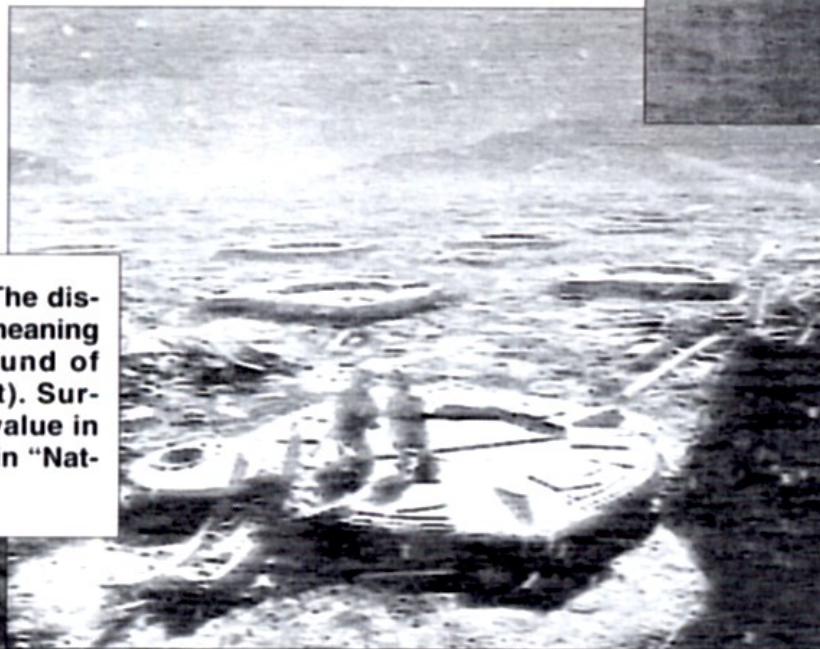
See *The Making of Workforce* for comments.

that with Andre Bormanis, and it's a wonderful episode. It ends on a tragic note, where Seven discovers that she really can't relate to people on a human level because the Borg have put in a fail-safe device in her brain to prevent her from experiencing certain kinds of emotions. You see her yearning and wanting to explore that part of herself, but physiologically not being able to."

Robert Beltran said somewhat bitterly, "That was fun, but it was all about Seven. I was just a hologram. It could have been any other character and worked just as well as far as having a prop for Seven of Nine. As an actor, I want to be able to reveal things about my character. When you are just a hologram, you can't do that."

That situation was rectified in VOYAGER's finale.

"If the Continuum has told you once, they've told you a thousand times. Don't provoke the Borg."
—Q (John de Lancie) to his son Q (Keegan de Lancie)



"My personal life is none of your concern."
—Seven of Nine

"I wasn't aware you had a personal life."
—The Doctor

HUMAN ERROR ★★★

3/07/01. Stardate not given. Production #264. Teleplay by Brannon Braga & Andre Bormanis. Story by Kenneth Biller. Directed by Allan Kroeker.

Voyager, hit by shock waves, has apparently stumbled into an alien minefield. Seven tries to figure out a way to detect the mines before they detonate, but keeps leaving her post to return to a hologram that allows her to experience life as a normal individual. She begins to date a holographic Chakotay, leading to her first kiss. But in the real world, Voyager is running into severe problems.

This was the last script Brannon Braga wrote for VOYAGER, and for his girlfriend-at-the-time Jeri Ryan. Said Bryan Fuller, "Brannon wrote

Q TWO ★★1/2

4/11/01. Stardate 54704.5. Production #265. Teleplay by Robert Doherty. Story by Kenneth Biller. Directed by LeVar Burton.

Icheb is giving a report on early Starfleet history to Captain Janeway, when he is interrupted by a rude young man. Almost immediately, Q arrives, telling Janeway that this is his son, the one conceived during "The Q and the Grey." Q Junior will be taking a vacation aboard Voyager. He soon causes many disturbances: a party in engineering, an attack by the Borg. When Janeway insists Q remove his son, he explains that Junior has caused chaos in the Continuum. He needs parenting, which Q wants Aunt Kathy to provide. The Continuum has decided to give the young Q one week as a human to become a model citizen, or be turned into an amoeba forever.

Biller explained that he had wanted to do this follow-up story after "The Q and the Grey," but didn't get the chance until he was in charge. He recalled, "I had pitched a story where this child comes back as a rambunctious adolescent that is very dangerous and the Continuum can't control, which actually has a lot of contemporary relevance. Although the episode



is light and very funny, it has serious undertones, which have to do with youth violence. Who is responsible for the behavior of adolescents? There are movements in places around the country to hold parents accountable for crimes that their children commit. There is a lot of comedy in the episode, but it has this serious subtext and serious theme, which has to do with what makes children act out, and what makes them feel that they need to do that."

"According to Federation law, holograms have no rights."

—Mr. Broht
(Barry Gordon)

AUTHOR, AUTHOR ★★★

4/18/01. Stardate 54732.3. Production #266. Teleplay by Phyllis Strong & Mike Sussman. Story by Brannon Braga. Directed by David Livingston.

The Doctor is putting the finishing touches to a holonovel in which a version of the EMH plays the protagonist and the Voyager crew has been "freely adapted" to dramatize the indignities endured by the long-suffering doctor of the "U.S.S. Vortex." With Barclay having discovered a way to have limited, real-time communication between Voyager and Earth, the Doctor uses his time to talk to his publisher, a Bolian named Arden Broht. The novel, *Photons Be Free*, is on course to be a huge bestseller...everywhere but on Voyager itself, where the crew—having played the drama out to its end—are less than pleased with the *holo-man-a-clef*.

It shouldn't be a surprise that a story in which "real life" inspires "fictional life" was itself based on actual events: Brannon Braga got the idea for this story from Robert Picardo's successful pitch of a book about the Doctor's experiences to Pocket Books. In further art-imitates-life news: Mr. Neelix confesses his desire to write a cookbook in this episode, while Ethan Phillips has already published a STAR TREK cookbook.

Actor Garrett Wang laughed about "Author, Author," saying, "I sit there and I wonder, 'Is this the writers' way of just warning us not to do a tell-all book? Is this what will happen?'"

"We, the people of Earth, greet you, in a spirit of peace and humility.... We hope to earn the trust and friendship of other worlds."
—The Friendship One probe, launched in 2067

FRIENDSHIP ONE ★★★
4/25/01. Stardate 54775.4. Production #267. Written by Michael Taylor & Bryan Fuller. Directed by Mike Vejar.

Admiral Hendricks (Peter Dennis) sends Janeway's crew on a mission to retrieve the Friendship One probe.

THE MORPH THE MERRIER: Strange behavior by the Voyager crew has an intriguing answer in "Renaissance Man."

Launched from Earth four years after Zephram Cochrane's first warp flight, this probe, loaded with information and technology, went out into the Delta Quadrant, where Starfleet lost contact with it. The Voyager crew find the ship's signature quickly, on a frozen planet with an antimatter-filled atmosphere. They find something else as well: the ruins of a society whose survivors explain that the technology of the Friendship One, foolishly applied, led to worldwide genocide.

Said Fuller, "Ken said, 'I want to do a story with mutants on a planet. Go figure it out.' Mike and I came up with the Starfleet probe angle, and we went off to write the episode. They locate the probe on this uninhabitable planet, and go down to look for it, and discover the reason the planet is uninhabitable: [the inhabitants] got the probe, reverse-engineered it, discovered antimatter technology, and inadvertently blew themselves up. Janeway is now faced with the repercussions of early Starfleet's actions."

"When Commander Chakotay and I first encountered the Ventu, I found them primitive, of little interest to me.... I came to realize that they're a resourceful, self-reliant people."
—Seven of Nine

NATURAL LAW ★★★
5/02/01. Stardate 54827.7. Production #268. Stardate 54814.5. Teleplay by James Kahn. Story by Kenneth Biller & James Kahn. Directed by Terry Windell.

Seven and Chakotay are in a shuttle flying to a Ledosian scientific conference. Over a beautiful jungle, an undetectable energy barrier appears, damaging the shuttle. The two are forced to punch a hole in the barrier and beam out. With Chakotay injured

and communication impossible through the barrier, Seven and Chakotay repeatedly disagree about how to handle contact with the primitive, non-verbal civilization, the Ventu, who are the inhabitants of this jungle.

There was no hint at a romance between Seven and Chakotay during this episode, despite plans for the finale. Said Biller, "We made a very specific decision not to make the episode be about them stranded and then having a relationship. To us, that was a story about Seven, who is from a very high-tech culture and in some sense has a superiority complex about technology, the values of cultures, and the Borg as a superior culture. Simpler, more primitive cultures, to her, might seem to hold less value. We were interested in the story about Seven learning to appreciate the value of a primitive culture. The story was about Seven's journey, with Chakotay there as a foil for her, somebody who did have a big appreciation for primitive cultures because of his background."

JOURNEY'S END: Neelix unexpectedly finds his place in the universe in "Homestead."

"Mr. Neelix...You are perhaps the most resourceful individual I have ever known."

—Tuvok

HOMESTEAD ★★★1/2
5/09/01. Stardate 54868.6. Production #269. Written by Raf Green. Directed by LeVar Burton.

Neelix's "First Contact Day" party is interrupted when scans detect Talaxian lifesigns from inside an asteroid field. Tom and Tuvok go with Neelix in the Flyer to look for these Talaxians. When the Flyer gets hit by thermolytic explosions, they crash-land on an asteroid, and Neelix awakens to find himself tended by a female Talaxian named Dexa (Julianne Christie). The Talaxians—mistrustful of outsiders—live inside the asteroid, and hold Tom, Tuvok, and Neelix prisoners. Nevertheless, Neelix manages to make friends with Dexa's son Brax (Ian Meltzer).

As the crew of Voyager prepares a shuttle to look for the away team, they

continued on page 40



TREKAPALOOZA!

WORKFORCE

The Voyager Crew Experiences the Road Less Travelled in this Emotion-Packed Two-Parter

By Anna L. Kaplan

As in previous seasons, VOYAGER's seventh season contained a number of two-hour, two-part episodes. The first, "Flesh and Blood," and the last, "End-game," each aired all in one night. The middle two-parter, "Workforce," was aired on two consecutive weeks. Although understandably not as emotional as the finale, in some ways "Workforce" was the most ambitious endeavor of the three.

As it was finally written and produced, "Workforce" told the story of what happened to much of the Voyager crew after they were forced off the ship, had most of their memories erased, and assumed new lives as workers on an alien planet. "Workforce Part I" was written by Kenneth Biller and Bryan Fuller, and directed by Allan Kroeker. "Part II," with a story by Biller and Fuller and tele-

play by Biller and Michael Taylor, was directed by Roxann Dawson (B'Elanna Torres).

Fuller recalled initially pitching a story in which the first one or two acts would play out as TITANIC, as the ship went down: "The ship is uninhabitable. They get into escape pods, and they launch. Everybody abandons ship. What we realize is that the escape pods all have microfractures in them, and they vent oxygen, and everybody in the escape pods—the entire crew—dies. It was dealing with all sorts of different issues in terms of identity and what happens after death, in a sci-fi context."

Fuller imagined that the Kobali, from the sixth season episode "Ashes to Ashes," would sweep down on the dead crew and reanimate them, which is the way the Kobali procreate. The crew would then have new Kobali lives. Of course, a few

crew members, Chakotay, the Doctor, Neelix, and Kim would have been on away missions, and then would have to either rescue the rest of the crew or decide to leave them in their new lives. The idea was not used in that form. Laughed Fuller about the idea of killing off most of the crew, "We were told that it was tasteless to do that."

So the story turned into the idea that a society needing workers would just hijack alien ships near their planets, force them to abandon ship, and perform procedures on them to remove most of their memories. The victims would retain their core identities and personality traits, but would have no memory of their previous lives or relationships. This allowed B'Elanna to struggle as a single pregnant woman, Tom to find work in a bar, and Janeway to be a worker, fall in love, and

live a more simple life. Tuvok, working at the same plant as Janeway, would have flashbacks, and be the first to become sus-

picious. Meanwhile, Chakotay was determined to save the crew at all costs and return them to Voyager.

As this story was conceptualized, everyone realized a lot of sets needed to be built and a lot of visual effects added. Ken Biller had nothing but praise for the production team that took this on:

"We got more production value in that episode than I think we ever did before. I give a lot of credit to Merri Howard and the production staff. Merri and I worked hard to really plan ahead and give the department heads lead-time to know what was coming and what they could plan. We ended up with a show with incredible sets and incredible opticals. It was really a big show."

The sets fell to production designer Richard James to design. He had high praise for the work his team did on the episodes: "The episode which is going to be submitted for consideration for the Emmy nomination is 'Workforce.' We put that up because [of] the scale and the scope. That was a two-hour show, and it was quite an undertaking. We feel that that looked really good."

One big set was the bar. Noted James, "The bar was literally an almost overnight miracle. It turned out, I thought, very nicely, all things considered. It had nice detail in there, and it didn't look like a set that had been rushed to completion...but it was."

He added, "I had the good privilege of working for thirteen years with some of the best people in the industry in the way of carpenters and painters and special effects. Those craftsmen really just extended themselves above and beyond the call of duty, as it were. They took personal pride in their work, and you could see it—it was just amazing. We would have crews working around the

DREAM A LITTLE DREAM:
As a brainwashed worker, Janeway finds love, but soon discovers her happiness comes at a price.



clock at those times, and the things that were accomplished by these crews were, to me, just amazing. And I see it, I've seen it every day for a number of years, but I am still impressed by it."

James worked with visual effects producer Dan Curry, because many of the sets—for example, the power plant—needed matte paintings and post-production work to achieve the correct look and scope. Said James, "We got very excited about that show—a lot of people did. When I was proposing my early designs for the power plant, I had very close contact with Dan Curry. I wanted his feedback on them, because he is such a brilliant artist. I said, 'Here's what I am proposing to do, and then you can make these big shots, and make it look a lot larger, but this is what the architecture is of this.' He was really excited. Then, during post production, he brought me over and was showing me some of the stuff that they were doing, and it was brilliant."

Another area involved creating exteriors that would complement the look of the inside of the power plant. These were seen during a number of chase sequences. Said James, "We managed to pull off a couple of areas in the back streets. They talked about the guys being in [Paramount's] New York Street. I thought, *No way does New York Street work for us.*

"I went out one day, and was walking around and trying to figure out what could possibly work into the look of the show and not look like New York Street. We have the different levels in the power plant, the catwalks, and so forth. The framework that holds up the blue sky [backdrop on the Paramount lot] has all the air conditioning equipment behind it, and with all those different levels and the alley, I thought it would be great. It doesn't look like New York Street for sure, and it plays into the look that we have accomplished in part with the levels on the catwalks in the power plant.

"At first [the producers] thought I was kidding. I said, 'This is where I want to do it.' They started walking away

from me and going away to the main part of New York Street. I said, 'No, I am serious. I want you to look at this.' Then everybody settled on it. When you look at it, it does look like it's a continuation of more sets.

"The framework holds up the big blue sky. There are a lot of levels behind that and it is all metal framework. That's where we did a lot of those chase scenes, where they were running in the alley and captured, and where Chakotay is captured. For the most part, when they were on the scaffolding and steps, those were the different levels that are all part of that structure. Dan enhanced all of that with his opticals. It looked big, and it was. It was a big show, and it was enhanced a great deal by the work that the visual effects department put into it as well."

Actor Robert Beltran enjoyed his action work in the two-parter. He said, "In 'Workforce' I have to go into disguise and bring my people back. That was fun. Roxann directed ['Part II'], and it was the first time that I have been able to work with Roxann as a director with a substantial storyline in it. It's a very good script, and I got to do some of the stuff that I enjoy doing, a lot of action and fighting."

Dawson explained, "The plot really does revolve mostly around the Captain. However, almost everybody had their own plot line, which we explore. But she is very much the main focus of the group. Her love interest, I think, is bitter-sweet. Ultimately, the truth has to win out, and her true position is on Voyager. Her feelings for Jaffen [James Read] are true. I think accepting that and acknowledging her feelings—which is what she does in a beautiful scene that she plays at the end of this episode, where she says goodbye to him and then accepts the fact that she is captain of Voyager and returns as the Captain—is really touching and beautiful. Chakotay has to see her on this planet as a happy woman who is falling in love, and somehow pull her from this world where she is quite content, back into



CLEAN SLATE: A planet's need for a docile work force ensnares Voyager in a compelling but false alternate reality.

the position of being captain on the ship. He knows that although what he is doing is right, he is also taking something away from her. He witnesses, in a very personal way, her happiness, and this also affects his character.

"Everyone is affected on different levels. B'Elanna has to be convinced that she is not a single pregnant woman on this planet, who was working as part of this workforce, but actually has a husband and is part of a crew. This is very hard, to be able to convince her of this alternate life. But here, that alternate life is actually much better than the one she has on this planet. Everybody has different reactions and different back-storylines to overcome in order to get back to the truth.

"They never lose what happened on the planet. The Doctor actually aids them in being able to recall their life on Voyager, which is the only thing

that would allow them to stay there and be normal. I think Kate as Janeway expresses that beautifully in the final scene, where she looks at the planet on the viewscreen as they are about to take off, and says, 'It may not have been real, but it was home to me.'"

Kate Mulgrew was thrilled with "Workforce," because Janeway finally got to experience intimacy. She said, "I loved it. That gratified me on a level that I had been arguing internally with for some time. We did it well.

"It was a desperate, terrible, heartbreaking scene at the end, where I have to say goodbye to him. Really, I couldn't stop crying. I was not acting. I just imagined it. It didn't take much to trigger that."

At the end, Voyager resumed course for Earth, the crew leaving their temporary home behind, but taking away memories of alternative lives that would stay with them, forever. **CFQ**

are contacted by Nocona (John Kenton Shull). He says his ship is mining the asteroid field and that Voyager must leave.

Ken Biller said that the end of this episode was a heavily guarded secret: "We put the script out as if it ended with Neelix saying goodbye to these people. I got a memo back from [Michael Piller] saying, 'This episode really begs the question of why Neelix is staying on the ship. Wouldn't it be more daring and more exciting just to have him leave?' In other words, he was fooled by the script.... There were three more scenes that Raf Green had written under my supervision that we just held off until the last minute. Then we finally made an announcement to the cast that this was happening, and [Ethan Phillips] was great about keeping it a secret. But he was very involved in the decision.

"I really like that episode. I thought it was about showing how



captain."

—The Doctor

"Now it doesn't have either."

—Captain Janeway

RENAISSANCE MAN ★★★

5/16/01. Stardate 54912.4 Production #270. Teleplay by Phyllis Strong & Mike Sussman. Story by Andrew Shepard Price & Mark Gaberman. Directed by Mike Vejar.

The Doctor and Janeway are returning in the Flyer from

technological aid called Cogswell video, where you superimpose the image of one character on the image of the other character after the morph. You want them, as much as possible, to get in exactly the same position. You hunch them over, so you are fitting within the outline of the character on the A-side of the transformation, as you become the B-character. Whoever is on the B-side of the

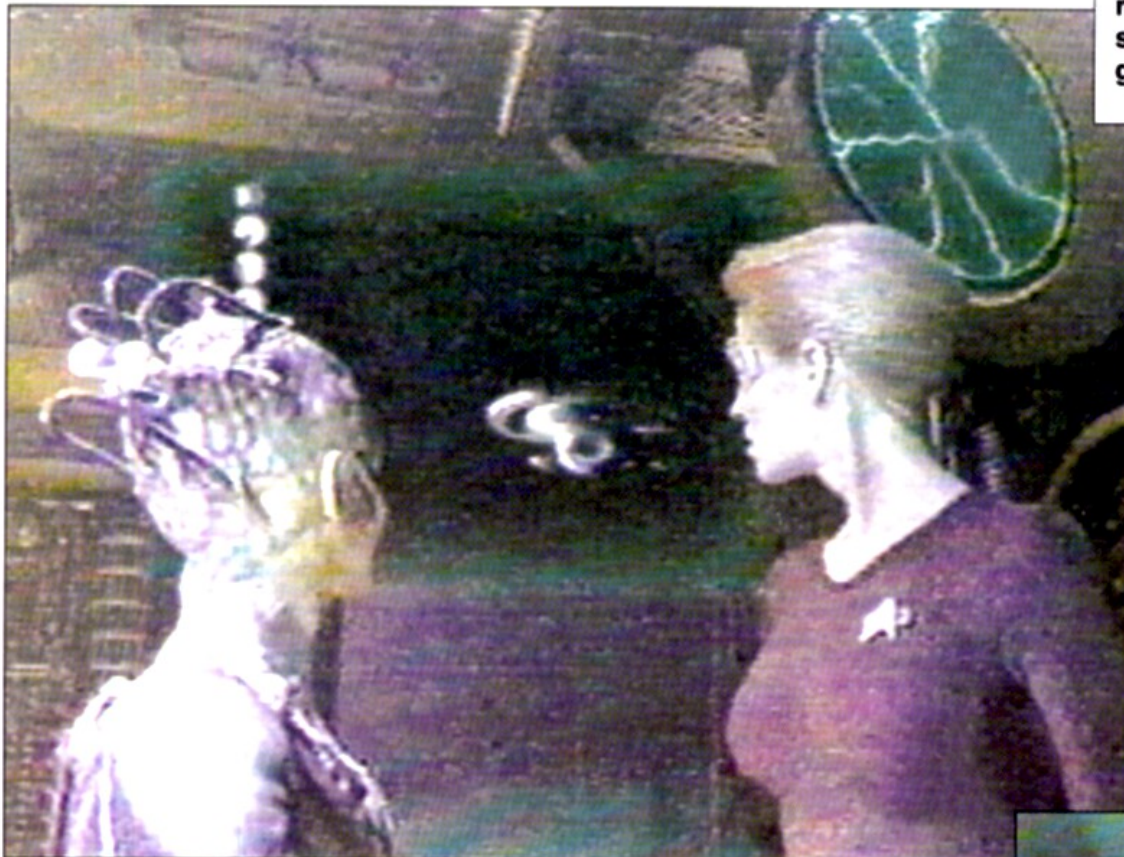
It took Janeway twenty-three years to get her crew home.

At an anniversary party, Captain Kim talks to a white-haired Admiral Janeway. B'Elanna is the Federation liaison to Q'onos; Tom is a holonovelist; Janeway's daughter is on a secret mission. The Doctor, who now goes by the name Joe, introduces his human wife as Barclay toasts all: "To the journey."

But Janeway is tortured by the sacrifices suffered in Voyager's final return, sacrifices that included the loss of Tuvok to madness and the deaths of Seven of Nine and Chakotay. So when Ensign Paris (Lisa Loci-



PLAYING FOR TIME: Janeway turns against Starfleet strictures and risks all to return her crew safely home in "Endgame."



transformation has to get in this painstaking position, and alter it millimeter by millimeter over a period of several minutes. The women are more limber than the men. Roxann and Kate can both raise their legs to impossible heights better than Robert Beltran and I can."

"Seven years ago you had the chance to use the Caretaker's Array to get Voyager home. Instead, you destroyed it.... You chose to put the life of strangers ahead of the lives of your crew. You can't make that mistake again."

—Admiral Janeway to Captain Janeway



Neelix had changed, and how Neelix had become more than he was at the beginning of the journey. I loved the scene where he is asking if Tuvok can help these people, and Tuvok is basically telling him, 'You are more than you think you are, Mr. Neelix.' To me that was really at the core of the episode. I think it was true that as Neelix was getting further and further away from the home, he had to ask himself what was in store for him. Yes, the Voyager crew were members of his family, but presumably if they got back to Earth, they would all split up and go their own way. He fell in love and found a cause and a position of importance and prominence."

an away mission and run into trouble. Once aboard, Janeway tells Chakotay that an advanced species stopped them to insist that Voyager could not use warp drive in their space, which covers thousands of light years. Under the threat of having Voyager dismantled, Janeway managed instead to negotiate an exchange: safe resettlement of the crew on a planet for the warp core. Janeway, to Chakotay's disbelief, is giving up.

This light-hearted, penultimate episode kept Robert Picardo and everyone else literally in suspense, as they had to hold position for the morph sequences that would reveal the secret behind Janeway's uncharacteristic behavior. Explained Picardo, "We have a

ENDGAME ★★★1/2

5/23/01. Stardate 54973.4. Production #271/272. Teleplay by Kenneth Biller & Robert Doherty. Story by Rick Berman & Kenneth Biller & Brannon Braga. Directed by Allan Kroeker.

The final episode of VOYAGER opens with a shot of the ship flying by the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco on the tenth anniversary of Voyager's return from the Delta Quadrant.

cero) approaches Janeway to tell her she has seen "the device"—something the Klingons will give only to the Admiral—Janeway goes to say goodbye to Tuvok and embarks on a mission that, if successful, will fly in the face of Federation mandates against the altering of history, but will also save her crew.

Ken Biller explained that he, Rick Berman, and Brannon Braga spent a lot of time thinking about the story for the finale. Berman thought time travel should be involved, inviting comparisons with TNG's end. Biller said, "We were mindful of the fact that there would inevitably be comparisons to 'All Good Things...' which was a time travel episode. That was a wonderful episode of STAR TREK, I think one of the best, and so I said, 'We don't have to shy away from that. It's a different set of characters, and a different show, and ultimately it is a different story. The only thing that it has in common is that they do involve time travel.'

"We always knew we were going to resolve the Tom and B'Elanna pregnancy. We started to come up with storylines for the different people. We decided that a big epic show could use some romance. We had hinted at a Seven/Chakotay romance, why not just go for it? That's what we did."

It was only at the end that the writer/producers decided the audience needed to see Voyager's return. Said Biller, "I think that the reality is that old Janeway died in a big fireball, and young Janeway got her ship home. It never happened that Seven died and that Chakotay died. I think that was a clear, thematic decision. They got home, and now they are all going to have to go lead their lives." **CFQ**

"Voyager can survive without a warp core, but not without a



THE BURDEN OF DREAMS: A holographic Chakotay proves a dangerous lure for Seven of Nine in "Human Error."

TREKAPALOOZA!

WILLIAM SHATNER

*The Actor Who Told Fans to Get a Life
Now Wants to Give Them His in a New Video Release*

By Sue Uram

Ask William Shatner about the occasional jealousies that arose out of STAR TREK, and he'll make no bones about it: "I have my own theory on why that happened: Leonard Nimoy, De Forrest Kelley, and I were there every day on the set. We were three buddies. They [the other regular cast members: George Takei, Nichelle Nichols, Walter Koenig, James Doohan, and Majel Barrett] came in on occasion—a day a week maybe, sometimes not at all. Then the conventions started and the actors would go to the conventions and the audience would stand up and

applaud. And the cast members began to consider themselves leads in the films and no longer wanted to take a back seat to us. Their perception of what reality was had changed."

And Shatner's own perception of his position in this universe? "I was playing a leading man—I was the Greek hero. I was playing a guy who got the girl and won the fight. I was functioning well; I was in my milieu."

Oh. Okay.

Shatner had granted us some time to discuss MIND MELD: SECRETS BEHIND THE VOYAGE OF A LIFETIME, a direct-to-video release

from Creative Light Entertainment and Mellis Productions, Inc., in which the man who will forever be remembered as James Tiberius Kirk and his former co-star, Leonard Nimoy, share their impressions of life, love, and coping with the TREK legacy.

In Trek-lore, a mind meld is an extremely strong form of Vulcan telepathy. It occurs when a highly disciplined Vulcan makes direct contact with another mind, and involves the mingling of egos, along with the

YESTERDAY IS TOMORROW: "Mirror, Mirror" explored the darker side of TREK's nature. In their conversations for MIND MELD, Shatner and Nimoy revealed their own demons.

occasional, painfully embarrassing invasion of a person's deepest secrets. In fact, MIND MELD, the video, offered a similar inquest into the souls of the two

stars. Said Shatner, "Mind meld is a STAR TREK term and indicative of what we are trying to do with the discussions.... The original idea was to have us interview each other, but I had more practice than Leonard, because I had written a series of books based on interviews. I had honed myself into an interview-type state. So, I just meandered down a conversational path.

"The topics were not exactly chosen. The overall concept that I breached to Leonard was absolute honesty, [asking him,] 'Was there anything you would not want to talk about?' He knew that I meant his problem with alcoholism. Once





YOU HAVE THE COMM: Having developed a knack for conversation while preparing his TREK books, Shatner branched out to on-camera interviews with his co-star, Leonard Nimoy.

he agreed to talk about that, there was nothing untouchable.”

And so MIND MELD covers the entire map, from Nimoy’s days supporting his family by part-timing as a cabbie to Shatner’s determination to quit smoking; from the tragic death of Shatner’s third wife, Nerine, to Nimoy’s aforementioned struggles with the bottle. All this is set in the comfy confines of Nimoy’s home, with talks located in his back yard and memorabilia room. According to Shatner, the two actors chose Nimoy’s house “because it was convenient for him, and I was just happy not to have all the equipment skid-marks at my house.”

Some of the revelations live up to the fabled darker aspects of the mind meld, with personal insights that strike at the heart of the actors’ private demons. Recalling Nerine’s suicide, Shatner admitted, “I never understood the pain she had. Her use of alcohol was assuaging the pain of her life. I only understood what pain she was feeling when she died, and then I felt some of that pain as well.

“I thought, *This is what she must have felt like every day of her life.* The alcohol was her way of dealing with the pain of her everyday life.”

Meanwhile, in a section titled “Personal Impact,” Nimoy blamed the series for his dependence on alcohol and the slow end of his thirty-three-year-old marriage, while Shatner ascribed his first divorce to the shooting of the show. Most interesting in this section is Shatner’s discussion of his legendary on-set peccadillos. “I was lonely and took affection where I could find it,”

the actor conceded. “Not every week from every beautiful girl on the show, but there was always someone around who had needs to be filled. I just wanted to taste as much of life as possible.”

Nimoy summed it up as follows: “It is simply a combination of a [lust for] life and availability.”

The cancellation of the series didn’t stop Shatner from accumulating a number of reps, whether deserved or not. About his alleged contempt for TREK fans, the actor claimed the perception was generally false: “I do not know why you would read that I was less than positive on the STAR TREK fans. I am surprised.... I had delved into fandom quite closely in the book I wrote, titled *Get A Life*, in which I discovered fans were coming to the conventions to see each other—they had a unity of feeling. My sense was that of admiration and respect for the fans. It is the individual fan or stalker who might elicit a negative comment, but I feel positive about the fans in general.”

Which is a good thing, since many of them came to Shatner’s defense over the cavalier treatment meted out to James Kirk at the end of STAR TREK: GENERATIONS. “I think you are right,” the actor said, “about the inappropriate send-off for Kirk. I cannot really speculate on how I would do it now, but I agree Kirk should have had a bigger send-off. It just was not done right.

“I think we are both [one and the same person]: Kirk is Shatner and Shatner is Kirk—it alternates. He kind of looks like me; he has my face and I speak his words. I have identified with the character and he is

very much a part of what I am. In fact, since the character was killed off, I am writing a series of books on Captain Kirk—the Kirk character in these books reflects the life passages that Shatner is going through.”

Those passages, admittedly, remain the stuff of considerable drama. Shatner’s remarried again, at age 71, to fellow horse trainer Elizabeth J. Martin, 43. He is finishing the editing on a sci-fi love story, titled *Groom Lake*, due out this year. And the team-up with Creative Light—originally to have the firm, “do something new with my website,” www.williamshatner.com—has led to a culling of frequently asked questions by fans into a VHS and DVD compilation, the first of a series. Shatner revealed that there are no scheduled topics for the remainder of these tapes: “It is based on revelations, and we have not yet progressed to another topic. The tapes are not highly edited, and [are] done in a conversational manner.”

But Shatner’s proudest accomplishment to date, according to him, is “probably giving love.” And while his ongoing struggle to achieve is based on his need to “[look] for continued successes—I want to do something good,” an admission to Nimoy in MIND MELD lends a more personal shade to his persistence: “Perhaps one of the reasons I am running as fast as I can is I can see my own death. I see death and mortality very clearly—I am truly afraid of dying.”

But ask Shatner why he and Nimoy are pursuing so thoughtful a discussion at this point in their careers, and the actor’s response is more matter-of-fact: “If I don’t do it now, when will I do it?”

CFQ

TREKAPALOOZA!

EUGENE WESLEY

RODDENBERRY, JUNIOR

Living Up to Your Father's Expectations is Always Rough. When They Include Plans to Change Society, It's a Killer.

By Sue Uram

Eugene Wesley Roddenberry, Junior, now twenty-seven years old, has recently begun a journey in search of his father. Son of science fiction icons Gene Roddenberry and Majel Barrett Roddenberry, fresh off the set of *EARTH: FINAL CONFLICT*, the television series filmed in Canada and on which he served as a technical advisor, Roddenberry, Jr. is now trying to come into his own while being forever reminded of the legacy he carries forward. "My dad's nickname in World War II was Rod," he explained. "Both of our names are Eugene Wesley Roddenberry in full, and I am a 'Junior.' I have been called 'Rod' by everyone since I was four years old. When I go to conventions, my legal name is listed, but mostly for business reasons. I go by the name Eugene for the most part, until people get to know me and find out my nickname. Then I am 'Rod.'"

In 1987, at the ripe old age of thirteen, Rod was drafted by his father into his first 'official' position as a production assistant on the set of *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION*. "I realize now that this was a job that most people would kill for. I was a production assistant, which basically means you ride around the lot on a bike delivering scripts and videos and whatever to different departments. I

also terrorized the security department by riding around like a maniac. I was on the set with the cast of *ST:TNG*, but at that age, I really did not care.

"My dad forced me to work at Paramount in 1987. I hated every second of it. I had a job that people would literally kill for, and I hated it! All I knew was that it detracted from my summers and my activities."



Understandably, Roddenberry's father wanted him to get into the entertainment industry. "But, when he passed away, I was only seventeen, and we really did not have any discussions about it."

Those last days were especially rough on the younger Roddenberry. "I do not really remember much. At the time, I was rebellious, and our relationship was strained; it was a father/son relationship. When he passed away, we were on good

terms. I saw him the night before he died, and we talked. It was difficult to see him ill. My father was such a strong-willed, stubborn man who liked things done his way. After he had the second stroke, he could not speak or walk. It was like taking the engine out of a 747 plane and expecting it to fly."

For the last four years, Rod worked as technical advisor on

ter three seasons—[my father] was gearing it to be more of what the critics wanted, full of cars blowing up and that sort of thing."

The younger Roddenberry referred to his job description on the series as a "homemade title," the work having to do with overseeing every script revision and outline that came through to make sure that it gelled with the theme of the series. He admitted, reluctantly, that most of the time his input was ignored: "I was brought in as technical advisor who was the producer's son. I was someone who did not bring the show out; I really felt that I had no right, as there were people with thirty years of experience working on the show. I have had two years of experience—who was I to tell them how to run the show?"

"I have no influence on EFC at all. Whatever I did, right or wrong, it was the only way I could influence the show. I felt as though I had a minor impact on the show, but nowhere near what

my dad had on his shows."

As for how EFC came out, with or without his input, "I am not pleased with the way the show is currently going. It may get me into trouble to say this, but I don't mind. We have the best crew and the best actors on EFC, and I am not just saying that because I worked on the

TWO WESLEYS ON-STAGE: Eugene Roddenberry's first work experience was as a production assistant on the set of *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION*, a privilege he only came to appreciate after the fact.

EARTH: FINAL CONFLICT. He revealed that the original storyline came from *BATTLEGROUND EARTH*, a script drafted by his father in 1976. "The EFC storyline has nothing to do with [the Roddenberry original] in any way, shape, or form. BE was to be a very action-packed series. The way I read it—and since *STAR TREK* had already failed as a series af-

show. But there is a lot of politics in this industry—it is less of an art and more of a business now. It is based on demographics; it is based on ratings; it is based on what the current ‘hit’ television show is at the time. When movies such as *THE MATRIX* or *BLAIR WITCH PROJECT* came out, you would hear those words work their way into production meetings.

“Unfortunately, it is a business, and Gene Roddenberry and his works have never been a business. They have always been a way of communicating, of sending a message, as well as being entertaining. I am not saying the show should not have explosions and big breasts; I am saying that it should have those things, but as ‘icing on the cake.’ You really want the bulk of the cake to be an intelligent story dealing with human issues set in the future, and the aliens are simply another part of the humanity that we do not look at every day. Aliens should allow us to look at humanity from an outside point of view. I think that that, in essence, is a traditional, Roddenberry show.”

While Majel Barrett Roddenberry continues to be credited as executive producer on *EFC*, Roddenberry, Jr. noted, “As an executive producer, she brought *EFC* to life and, ideally, was supposed to be there, guiding it and making all of the big decisions. I do not know what she says she is doing, but she really does not do the job as envisioned anymore. I think she has been beaten down.

“She fought a huge corporation—some of the producers can sell a car with no wheels; they are the slimiest guys in the world; they can get anything by you. My mom is fighting alone; they are saying they will do what she advised them to do, and then they do what they want to do.

“I alternately get mad at her and feel sad for her—I want to help her and then I just get mad again. It is not her fault. She was next to my father during *STAR TREK*, but I do not think she developed the Hollywood sense that he had. She is getting it, but she is not there yet.”

Rod admitted that being the

son of Gene Roddenberry can play havoc with one’s career choices. “As far as the industry goes, I found that [while] working on *EFC*, I was privy to lot of information because I was a Roddenberry. I was at most of the production meetings as well. At the same time, when I spoke or sent out something, I felt that they would then agree with me based on the fact that I was the producer’s son—they were being nice to me because of that. I am not saying that everyone did that.... There are many great producers, and not everyone in the business is bad. On the other hand, I rarely heard anyone say, ‘No, that is not a good idea, let’s not use that suggestion,’ or ‘It’s not going to work,’ or ‘It’s been done before.’”

As for his father’s original “baby,” Roddenberry expressed hope that the *STAR TREK* franchise would continue indefinitely. “Not only do I think that it was a very well-written, well-thought-out series, but I think that it arrived at a time that was perfect for it. I think that my dad was almost micro-managing the *STAR TREK* shows, which tended to upset a lot of people. Too bad! There are a lot of intelligent, visionary writers out there, and I think that my father was one of the many at the time who had the opportunity to share his point of view with people through a science fiction series. My dad gave the writers of his time a way in which to reach people.”

Rod shared nothing but effusive praise for the follow-up series: “I think the show was really good. And, despite what people may say about *DEEP SPACE NINE* and *STAR TREK: VOYAGER*—whether they were good or whether they were ‘true’ Roddenberry or not ‘true’ Roddenberry—I have to give credit to Rick Berman. Berman could have really turned the show into something crappy, but I think he held to the themes and social issues.”

As for the newer Roddenberry series, *ANDROMEDA*, Roddenberry stated, “I have to give credit where credit is due on that show. Let’s start with the basics: Although I have only



STAR TREK GENERATIONS: Eugene Wesley “Rod” Roddenberry, Junior poses with his mother, Majel Barrett Roddenberry.

seen five episodes of the

show’s first season, I found them [all] good, and one was wonderful and holding true to the Gene Roddenberry name. I have to give that credit to the head writer, Robert Wolfe, whom I have met and spoken with about the show.

“While Wolfe does want to do his own type of series, I think he believes in Gene Roddenberry, believes in the *STAR TREK* idea, and knows what made it good. I have to give Wolfe credit for the success [the show] has enjoyed so far, and I really do not know the direction it will be going in. I know that Wolfe is fighting the business side as well as trying to keep the creative aspects viable.”

Roddenberry conceded that people often think of his father as an icon, while to him, Gene Roddenberry was just “Dad.” “People often put my mom and dad up on a pedestal, and this is something I often address. In no way do I take anything away from my father or mother. However, there are a lot of people who have written books with negative comments about [my father]. I believe that there are portions of those books that are true, because in this business I

have seen where you can be the nicest guy in the world, but you have to say ‘No’ to people and you have to not call people back. Unfortunately, that upsets a lot of people.

“One of the stories I heard at his memorial service was a letter that he had received from a quadriplegic man whose parents had taken care of him the best that they could, but could no longer care for him and had to place him in a home. He tried for years to kill himself because life was just too unbearable for him.

“In 1966, when *STAR TREK* came out with a vision of a future where he could fit in—where there might be hope for him—it in turn gave him hope for his own future. The letter went on to give credit to the show and to my father for his survival, and ended by saying that he was now a forty-eight-year-old man with a wife and two children. He felt he owed it all to *STAR TREK*.

“I have heard so many other stories like that one. The fact that a show can touch lives is inspirational to me.... I would like to know that when I pass on, humanity is progressing in a positive direction. Humanity is at its best when it works together for a single goal.”

CFQ

Seed of CHUCKY

The Producers Wanted to Pump Up the Self-Referential Humor, but Universal Wasn't Laughing

By Fred Topel

CHILD'S PLAY series creator Don Mancini has three workable ideas for a fifth Chucky film, yet none of them are likely to go into production. Despite the success of 1998's *BRIDE OF CHUCKY*, Mancini finds that Universal Pictures, which produced the last three of the four killer-doll films, simply does not want to make another movie.

"Columbine really scared a lot of people off of these movies, with some practical reason, because it's much harder for studios to advertise these movies now," Mancini admitted. "Chucky has a really young audience. Normally, they could advertise these movies during prime-time, and you just can't do that anymore. That's part of the reason they were really scared off."

Producer David Kirschner felt the politics of Joe Lieberman—who heavily attacked Hollywood violence during the 2000 campaign—played a part, too. "As a result of all the media attention that went with that, a host of people, including Stacey Snider, stood before Congress and testified. I think she felt that much more, if you will, responsible for not advertising [violence] to kids. As a result of that, we were in a very difficult position. That advertising has been important to the lifeblood of this film. Because it's a toy that has come to life,

that makes it that much more difficult with an R rating."

Snider herself was not available for comment.

Currently, the only completed script is *SEED OF CHUCKY*. The story begins where *BRIDE OF CHUCKY* left off, after the dying Tiffany doll gave birth to a child. This child grows up gender-confused, because it is not

"anatomically correct," like its parents (which is also why the title is *SEED* and not *SON OF CHUCKY*).

Meanwhile, within the *CHILD'S PLAY* reality, Universal decides to make a film about the doll killings. The seed sees the animatronic puppets on a TV show, and mails himself to Hollywood.

There, he uses

the voodoo incantation to resurrect Chucky and Tiffany in the animatronics' bodies. This movie-within-a-movie setup would have allowed Mancini to write a part for Jennifer Tilly—who played Tiffany in *BRIDE*—to appear in the movie as herself. Said Mancini, "I wanted to push the comedy

even more, because I felt like that was something that was really successful in *BRIDE OF CHUCKY* that

people responded to, and I frankly didn't feel that Chucky as a concept was particularly legitimately scary after you see all these movies.

"Another thing I wanted to do was subvert the expectations of what people would bring to a movie regarding the son of Chucky. I felt like we already have these two characters that are psychopathic killers—it was a great opportunity for a lot of humor and satire by having the child of Chucky be completely innocent. What would drive Chucky more insane than to have this kid who wants nothing to do with killing, who is a total pacifist?"

As *BRIDE OF CHUCKY* spoofed road movies and romantic comedies, *SEED OF CHUCKY* spoofs domestic dramas like *ORDINARY PEOPLE* and *KRAMER VS. KRAMER*. Chucky and Tiffany hate each other, but try to fix their "marriage" for the

ANNND...CUT! *SEED OF CHUCKY* would have centered on the filming of a *CHILD'S PLAY*-like film. Below: Shooting the original.



sake of their child. However, Tiffany puts the kid in dresses and calls it Glenda, while Chucky, calling it Glen, wants to teach him to kill like his father. That family dynamic happens within the story of all three dolls searching for human bodies to occupy.

"What forms the framework of the plot is that [Tiffany] decides that she wants to be Jennifer Tilly," Mancini continued. "They hole up in Jennifer Tilly's attic and they secretly have to get her pregnant, because they need to make a human baby for the soul of their child. So they conspire to artificially inseminate Jennifer Tilly, and there's this whole scene where Chucky is jacking off to get a sperm sample, and he's looking at *Fangoria* instead of *Playboy* for inspiration."

As Tiffany aims to become Jennifer Tilly, Chucky plans to inhabit the body of the fictional film's director, who is having an affair with Tilly. "This other part of the story is that Jennifer Tilly's career is in such a bad place that she's saying, 'I'm an Oscar nominee. Now I'm fucking a puppet. What happened to my career?' Jennifer was totally into doing all of this—she's such a good sport and totally gets it. She went, 'Make me a bitch. Really, just make me horrible.'"

The killings in *SEED OF CHUCKY* are even more comedic than those in *BRIDE*, both playing off the family drama angle and referencing other genre films. "There was a scene where the character of this sleazy paparazzo, this tabloid photographer who was following Jennifer Tilly around trying to get naked pictures of her, ends up in this sequence that parodies *REAR WINDOW*. He's taking pictures of her through the windows of her house at the same time that the dolls are choreographing this whole thing where they're artificially inseminating her.... He's going to go develop these pictures and that provides motivation for Chucky to kill him.

"At the same time, [Chucky] wants to make a man of his son. It's driving him crazy that Tiffany is referring to this kid as Glenda and dressing him in dresses, and also that she doesn't want him to be a killer. So he

sneaks him out in the middle of the night and goes to this photographer's dark room. It's supposed to be a parody of a father-son fishing trip, but it's 'I'm going to teach you to kill.'

"They lay in wait in this darkroom and Chucky basically says, 'Okay, you watch me. Follow my lead...' Glen comes running out to warn [the paparazzo]. Of course, the guy sees this freaky little doll come running after him. He freaks, staggers back and falls against these shelves with all the photo developing chemicals. This acid falls right on his face. It's eating his skin away and Chucky's like, 'Atta boy! That's my son!'"

Mancini even went as far as to create a marketing tagline that referenced the double entendre to the *SEED* title: "Get a load of Chucky now." "That went even beyond [*BRIDE*'s tagline], 'Chucky gets lucky,'" said Mancini. "I don't even know if the people at Universal got that but the fans would have liked that a lot."

Some Universal executives told Mancini they thought the *SEED OF CHUCKY* script was too inside and the general public might not get it. With *SEED* rejected, the Internet quickly picked up rumors that Mancini was writing a spoof of *HANNIBAL*, even though that idea never got past the idea stage.

"It was a joke," Mancini said. "[Producers] David Kirschner, Corey Sienege, and I were just sitting around thinking, *What can we do to try to light a fire to get them interested?* *HANNIBAL* had just come out and I said, 'What if we did this movie that was basically a parody of *HANNIBAL* and it was about Chucky's only surviving victim out for revenge? But instead of wanting to feed him to wild boars, [he] wants to feed him to toy poodles or something?'"

"The virtue of these characters is that because they're dolls, you can plug them into so



TOYING WITH SATIRE: *HANNIBAL* was one of the potential targets of a *CHILD'S PLAY* sequel, but Universal didn't see the humor.

many different kinds of situations and it's

always ripe for satire and parody. Whereas in *HANNIBAL* Lecter was holed up in Florence because he was a man of culture, Chucky would be in Venice—the Venetian in Las Vegas—where he'd be part of a ventriloquism act... When Chucky's only surviving victim puts out the bounty on him, the ventriloquist character decides he's going to turn him in to get the reward.

"A reporter got wind of [this plotline] through Jennifer actually, but we never even got to the point where we pitched that to studio. Frankly, we were skeptical that Universal would even want to parody *HANNIBAL* when they're doing *RED DRAGON* now."

Mancini thought of another idea to counter the issue of making R-rated films. "I came up with this idea: What if we did *A CLOCKWORK CHUCKY*, where Chucky's deprogrammed somehow *a la* *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*, where he's hooked up and forced to watch

scenes from his previous movies? He becomes completely sick at the sight and thought of violence. I thought that was hilarious that you could actually do a PG-13 movie where you tone the violence way down but still amplify the comedy.

"I thought it was a clever solution to the challenge they were posing. You could actually make the movie about the current environment and how it's difficult to make violent movies. It would be really funny to show Chucky in classic horror movie situations where he's in the backseat of a car with two teenagers necking on some lover's lane. He's sitting there and here's a knife and here's a cleaver, but it just makes him sick and he can't do what it is that he wants to do. We pitched it to them and they kind of went, 'Well, no, we don't really get it.'"

Despite all his frustrations, Mancini remains optimistic that a *CHILD'S PLAY* sequel will happen. "The world's always turning," he concluded. "Sooner or later they will decide to make one."

CFQ

REVELATION

Alchemy, Conspiracies, and Evil Figure in the Theatrical Return of Romulus Films

By Alan Jones

After making their last movie in 1974 with *THE ODESSA FILE*, the legendary British independent film company, Romulus Films, marks their high-profile return with *REVELATION*, a medium-budget mystical adventure-thriller blending the supernatural with the modern cyber-skills of the computer age. "I call it the thinking man's *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK*," said producer Jonathon Woolf, the forty-four-year-old son of Sir John Woolf and nephew of James Woolf, the masterminds behind such vintage British classics as *THE AFRICAN QUEEN*, *ROOM AT THE TOP*, and *OLIVER!* Woolf took over the family business in 1993, and is now applying the canny knowledge he learned as a City of London investment banker to revive the company's feature production arm.

Said Woolf, "I began at Romulus looking after their investments and overseeing their back-catalogue title sales. I kept being approached to finance movies, but I never thought the time was quite right to take the plunge. Then the financial dynamics changed, the British woke up to the fact that American appeal was important, and the figures looked promising, as long as one got the right script, the right director, and the right cast."

Eventually the right script turned up totally by accident. "I was tidying up my office at Christmas, 1999," Woolf explained, "and found this script lying at the bottom of a huge pile of papers. I decided to take it home for some light holiday reading and ended up really enjoying it. It had been in the office for five years and had come with a cover-letter by the writer, Frank Falco.

"While I liked the script—it contained the germ of a brilliant idea—I knew it would need rewriting. In its original form, it was too British, too parochial, and took a typical police procedural approach."

Woolf knew exactly the right person for the rewrite: an old college friend of seventeen years, writer, producer, and director Stuart Urban, whose credits include the award-winning television drama *OUR FRIENDS IN THE NORTH*, and his feature film debut, *PREACHING TO THE PERVERTED*. Said Urban, "I, too, thought the Falco screenplay had a fascinating central premise: a sacred box travelling through time and an immortal trying to get hold of it. It was a great concept for a fantasy, but it was written on too small a canvas and had a comedy-thriller slant that really didn't deliver the full potential of the idea. Jonathon invited me to rewrite it, and I felt I could invest the property with contemporary rationales about where mankind stands today on the subjects of technology, biochemistry, ethics, and occult symbolism."

As re-conceptualized by Urban,



REMAKING HISTORY: Malta stood in for worldwide locations throughout the ages during *REVELATION*'s filming.

REVELATION concerns the search for an ancient relic known as the Loculus that holds an awesome secret heralding the crossover of science and religion in the new millennium. A centuries-old secret society, led by the demonic sentinel Praenuntius, wants to reclaim the sacred artifact. So does billionaire mogul Magnus Martel, who puts his estranged cryptographer son Jake and young alchemy student Mira on the recovery trail.

The mind-shattering hunt takes the star-

crossed protagonists beyond all known boundaries of prophesized religious belief. Their dangerous journey becomes a shocking voyage of self-discovery and personal fulfillment as they race to unravel the devastating knowledge at the heart of the Loculus.

Starring Terence Stamp (*THE PHANTOM MENACE*), Udo Kier (*SHADOW OF THE VAMPIRE*), Liam Cunningham (*A LITTLE PRINCESS*), Derek Jacobi, Heathcote Williams, Celia Imrie, and screen newcomers James D'Arcy and Natasha Wightman, *REVELATION* was filmed in late 2000 on location in Malta and Cornwall, and at Pinewood Studios, London. Said Urban, "Obviously *REVELATION* is a work of fiction, yet—apart from the Loculus box and the heightened-reality

climax—everything is based on real myths and truth. And everything is coded and symbolized throughout, so audiences can work

out the jigsaw puzzle of clues if they try.

"The Knights of St. John order were heavily infiltrated by alchemists, and that provided a neat tangent for us, as they believed the essence of life lay in the chromosomes and was the key to human identity. That was a revolutionary discovery at the time, because alchemists believed experience was more important than faith, and that to achieve experience you had

to have courage that might involve sacrifice."

Four months after Urban had read every textbook on alchemy, astrology, and mysticism, including little-known facts about each in his screenplay, Woolf received the results and was delighted. He said, "The original concept was still very much to the fore, but Stuart broadened it out and made it international with the additional texturing of ancient beliefs, the Knights Templar, and sacred geometry. Traditional religion seems

to have had its day, and people all over the world are reaching out for something else, something to fire their spiritual enthusiasm anew."

As for the casting, Woolf and Urban specifically wanted Terence Stamp to play billionaire Magnus Martel. Said Urban, "In some ways I wanted to paint Magnus as a James Bond-style villain, deeply associated with the occult, spiritualism, and metaphysics. Who better than Terence for the role?"

Remarked Stamp, star of *ALIEN NATION* and *RED PLANET*, "The main motive in my career is to tackle roles that contain something I haven't done before. I thought Magnus was an interesting part because although he's a villain, he had both positive and negative sides to his character. The secret organization he joined propelled him into great wealth and power, and he was entrusted with a sacred relic that, as the film opens, he's only realized embodies an astonishing power for great good or great evil. On his own volition he has decided to return it to its rightful resting place or destroy it.

"Most of his life, Magnus has behaved like a selfish reptile, but then he has an epiphany, because what he's ultimately commanded to do is further than he's prepared to go.... Unlike such movies as *THE SIXTH SENSE*, [*REVELATION*] uses ancient philosophy and esoteric teachings as a tent pole to support the horror. That basis in truth makes it even more horrifying."

For the role of Praenuntius, Woolf and Urban's first choice was cult-horror-icon Udo Kier, star of the Andy Warhol-produced duo *FRANKENSTEIN* and *DRACULA*. Said Kier, "I had long telephone conversations with Stuart about *REVELATION*," he said. "And then he sent me a video of *PREACHING TO THE PERVERTED*. That combination of religion and sadomasochism really appealed to me. Then when I read the script, I thought it was absolutely brilliant. I wondered why nobody had ever had the idea of bringing the Church and genetic engineering together before. I truly believe that if Jesus Christ was reincarnated today, he'd use the Internet, because he'd quickly realize it was the most effective way to spread his gospel in the modern era. Plus, Praenuntius makes an appearance in numerous time periods, including the Crucifixion and the Middle Ages. After seeing *GLADIATOR*, I quite fancied myself wearing a toga, and here was the perfect opportunity to realize my dream. How could any actor turn down the chance to play a character responsible for giving the order to kill Jesus?"

As for the central roles of Jake and Mira, both producers felt it was important the two main leads be virtual unknowns. Said Urban, "Using unknowns provided the perfect counterbalance to our main headliners. Too many films are constrained by star names,

who aren't usually the best actors for the roles. Jake has been in prison for three years as the film opens, and Mira is a mysterious woman who seems to spring from nowhere. It seemed the correct decision that both parts should be played by unfamiliar names and James D'Arcy and Natasha Wightman were ideal choices."


James D'Arcy, star of two high-profile British television series, *NICHOLAS NICKLEBY* and *REBEL HEART*, said, "Within three pages of reading the script, I was gripped. I couldn't stop turning the pages because it was packed with interesting ideas, bizarre facts and amazing twists. I immediately met up with Stuart, found out Terence Stamp would be playing my father—much to the delight of my own mother, who is an enormous fan—and said, 'Let's go.'

"Jake is a troubled young man, messed up emotionally and completely unsure of his next move in life. When his father needs help in breaking these ancient codes, he does it mainly because the subject links in with something Jake has a clear affinity for. Then he's drawn in further by something he doesn't fully understand—as the story unfolds, we realize why he hasn't understood the bigger implications.

"When he first meets Mira, Jake isn't sure if he can trust her, or if he even likes her. But he's inexorably drawn to her for other reasons, so Jake embarks on a richly rewarding personal quest that has been exciting to play. Jake is the eyes of the audience and he asks the questions they want to know—the character doesn't understand alchemy, the occult, or the Knights Templar either."

REVELATION marks Natasha Wightman's first major film acting work. The former stage actress was suggested to Woolf and Urban by Debbie McWilliams, the casting director responsible for discovering James Bond girl Famke Janssen in *GOLDENEYE*. Said Wightman, "There were a lot of things I could relate to in the script, as I am interested in mysticism and the occult. My boyfriend studied alchemy and, just before the audition, I'd taken up equine holistic medicine. I was sort of going through the same journey of discovery as Mira, so the timing was perfect.

"I'm a bit scared by horror movies in general. I tend to sit transfixed as my imagination goes on overdrive, and I do get really



THE BIG DISCOVERY: James D'Arcy and Natasha Wightman play adventurers on the trail of time-bending power.

frightened by them. But *REVELATION* had a depth you don't normally find in the genre, and I thought it really opened up hidden layers and important subjects for discussion."

Responsible for the special effects on *REVELATION* is Double Negative, the London Soho-based visual effects company that created computer-generated images for *PITCH BLACK* and *THE NUTTY PROFESSOR 2*. Double Negative's visual effects supervisor Paul Franklin explained the main effects in the supernatural quest: "To augment the existing story with creepy atmospheric and finessed landscapes, we changed a lot of backgrounds, removed modern structures, and added architectural detail to existing buildings. The two most exciting challenges are creating Praenuntius's acolytes—his Army of Darkness, which we've given a slow-motion, ghostly feel—and ensuring the climactic avalanche of sand in the catacombs-set finale attains a thrilling, seat-edged dynamic. For the latter effect, we've used miniatures and digital manipulation to extend the scope of the sequence for maximum suspense and excitement."

"In many ways, *REVELATION* is a typical supernatural horror thriller with many high-tone shocks," remarked Urban. "But using the elements of mysticism and historical alchemic fact makes it rise above the narrow limits of what's perceived as a genre movie. Rarely does the genre explore the hidden aspects of religion and the occult, and I wanted to do that to make it thought-provoking and compelling in unique ways. We chose Malta for our main location because the Mediterranean island is steeped in ancient history. Every square inch of the terrain is packed with interesting temples, monuments, and burial places with a pan-European look. That meant we could use it for numerous backdrops and stand-ins for Italy, France, and Greece as well. Malta was invaluable because it allowed us to get the best out of our budget. The eclectic locations give *REVELATION* a truly epic feel to match the awesome and frightening scale of our unique story."

CFQ

RETURN TO NEVERLAND

Peter Pan Flies Again, As Disney Offers Up Another All-in-the-Family Sequel

By Andrew Osmond

It's all about finding faith, trust, and pixie-dust," said Chris Chase, producer of the new Disney animated film RETURN TO NEVERLAND. Chase was talking about RETURN's lead character, Jane, daughter of one Wendy Darling and the heroine of this sequel to Disney's 1953 film, PETER PAN. Abducted from wartime London by a vengeful Captain Hook (who mistakes Jane for her mother), the girl is taken to the dream-world of Neverland, falling in with its hero Peter Pan and his loyal Lost Boys.

"Jane is about ten or eleven years old," said Chase, "and she's in a difficult situation at the start of the film. Her father has gone off to the war, and while her mother, Wendy (voiced by Kath Soucie, whose past roles include Daisy Duck in the TV series QUACK PACK) is home, Jane has a lot of the responsibility of caring for her little brother, Danny. Jane's a very practical, serious girl—under a lot of pressure. The film charts her emotional journey, as she comes to terms with her responsibilities and at the same time regains her sense of hope and wonder."

"Jane has grown up way too fast in wartime London," added Sharon Morrill, executive in charge of production on RETURN TO NEVERLAND. "She doesn't believe in what she calls 'childhood nonsense,'

in fairy-tales and her mother's stories of Peter Pan. The central theme of the film is that, no matter how old you are, it's vital to keep your childhood imagination alive."

Much of the film focuses on the relation between Jane and Peter Pan. "Peter is intrigued by Jane," said Morrill. "At first he doesn't like her, because she doesn't like him. But he realizes he needs to make her believe in magic again, because of Tinker Bell." As PETER PAN fans know, if a child doesn't believe in fairies, the results can be fatal. Tinker Bell's light is going out because of Jane.

The solution? Said Morrill, "Peter gets Jane to think and act like a Lost Boy, to go on an adventure and have fun, so she gets caught up in his world." The snag is Jane has already made a deal with Peter's foe Hook. "She's desperate to get home to London and her family. She's tried to fly like her mother did, but she can't. So Hook offers to take Jane home himself if she'll help him." As a result, Peter is captured.

The film is one of several Disney sequels to continue a story through the next generation. The device was used in the video films LITTLE MERMAID II: RETURN TO THE SEA and LADY AND THE TRAMP II: SCAMP'S ADVENTURE. "There's a natural inclination to tell a story through the children of the original heroes," said Morrill. "But

each child goes through a different arc, a personal journey. With Scamp, it was wanting to be independent in a 'world without fences.' With Melody (Ariel's daughter in LITTLE MERMAID II), it was not fitting in and wanting to know who she was. With Jane, it's her lack of belief."

RETURN TO NEVERLAND had one of the more convoluted development paths for a Disney film, though not as torturous as 2000's EMPEROR'S NEW GROOVE. "The project started several years ago," said Chase. "At first, the plan was to produce it as a theatrical feature at Disney's Canadian studios. When those studios were closed down, the film was sent to Walt Disney Animation Australia at the beginning of 2000, to be made as a straight-to-video. Then the studio realized the film was special, and upgraded it to a full-length cinema feature (running about seventy-two minutes), though still being made in Australia."

Morrill added, though, that while the story was developed through different versions, the central plot was always the same. "It's always been the same story: a little girl who doesn't believe, and how she goes on an adventure to Neverland to find that belief. The main themes and emotional arc never changed."

While there have been many Disney video sequels in recent

years, RETURN TO NEVERLAND is only the second theatrically-released follow-up to a major, in-house Disney animated feature (the first was 1990's RESCUERS DOWN UNDER). The challenge was particularly acute, because Sydney's Disney studio, like its counterpart in Tokyo, had previously specialized in straight-to-video films, TV series, and TV-derived features like RECESS: SCHOOL'S OUT.

"The film has been four years in development and production, which is a pretty long time," said Chase. "But we have only a small fraction of the budget of a film like TARZAN or ATLANTIS." Nonetheless, Chase is extremely proud of what the Australian team achieved, believing the quality of their work is at the same level as the pricier Disney projects. "There is material in this film that's as good as anything in Disney animation," said Chase. "Sure, there are some parts which may make older viewers think, *Okay, this is a small film*, but other scenes are just stunning."

Chase said, "The look of RETURN was designed to be respectful of the classic style of the 1953 original, but with some updates. When you look at the color palette of the first film, you're conscious of the period in which it was made, so we've 'homaged' the colors, but updated them a little to take advantage of improvements in

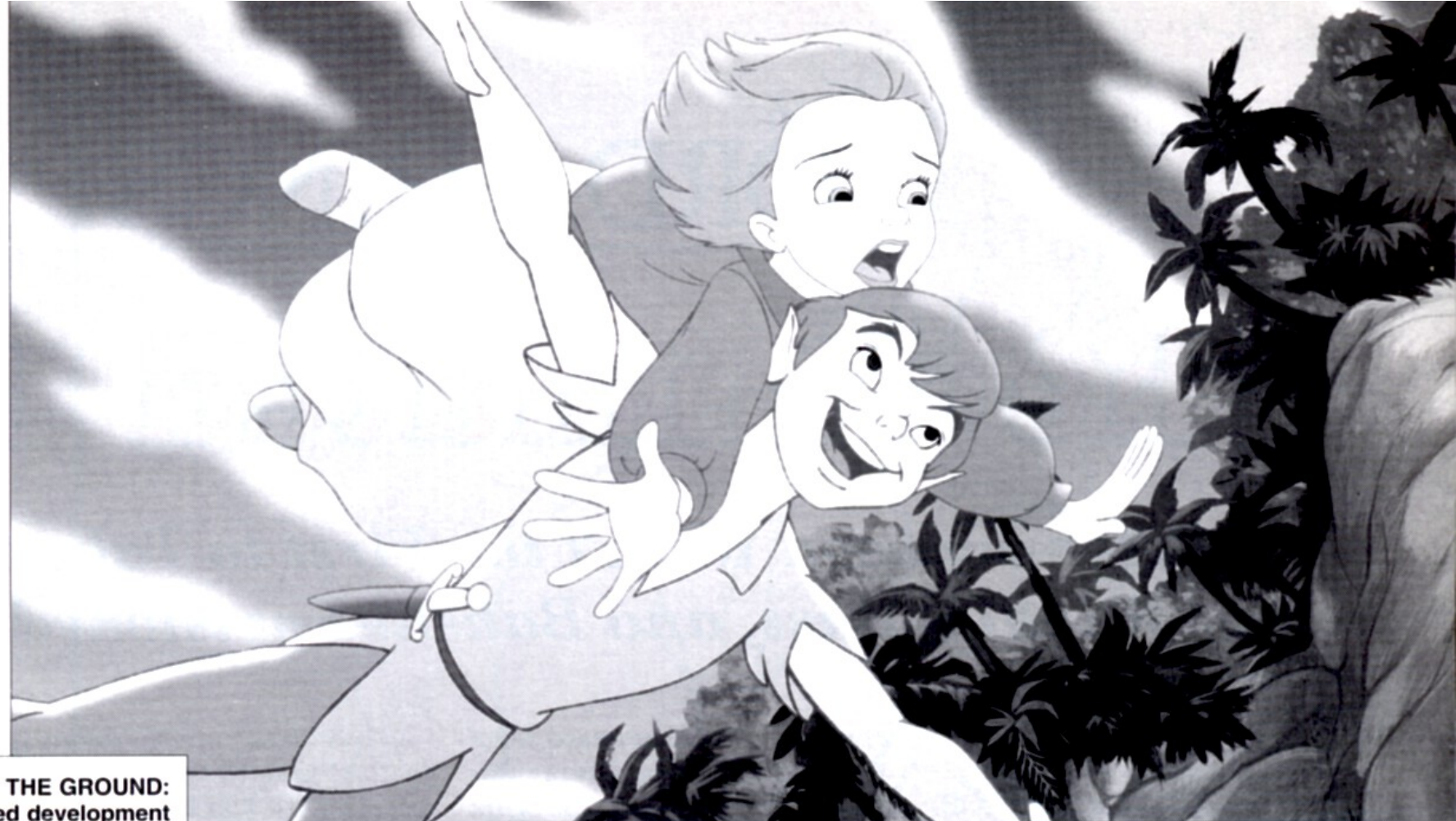
film technology. The character designs have been slightly changed, but they're still very close to those in PETER PAN. We wanted to keep to the look of classic Disney."

Did that rule out computer-aided scenes? "There are a few elements—not even scenes—where we were helped by computers, but I hope they're not noticeable. For example, it was easier to use computers when we wanted to show a door opening convincingly in three dimensions. Hook's ship was created in 3D to allow us to move it on screen in more dynamic ways. But we tried to incorporate these things as unobtrusively as possible, so the audience doesn't see the joins. We used computers when they offered us the cleanest, simplest way to tell the story effectively, given our time-scale and budget."

Many characters from the first PETER PAN film are present and accounted for: Peter himself, Tinker Bell, the villainous Hook and Smee, and the Lost Boys (who, unlike in the JM Barrie book, opted to stay with Peter rather than Wendy). Chase confirms that the original film's Red Indians, whose song, *What Makes the Red Man Red?* might be questionable today, do *not* make an appearance. Tiger Lily fans are going to have to get their jollies elsewhere.

Nana II replaces the Darlings' canine guardian from the first film, and Hook has another nemesis to replace the crocodile. His new nightmare is an orange octopus, which uses its suction cups to produce a popping (or should that be ticking?) sound. "There's a lot of comedy between Hook and the octopus, as there was between Hook and the crocodile in the first film," said Morrill. "Hook's a very funny, over-the-top character, and is great for physical comedy."

How does Jane's design compare with Wendy from the first PETER PAN? "Wendy was a very 'proper' little girl," said Morrill. "We've tried to make her daughter a little more of her time—wartime London—so



FINALLY OFF THE GROUND: After a tortured development cycle, RETURN TO NEVERLAND is finally making it to theaters.

she's a bit more independent, a bit less

polished. For example, her haircut is different, more practical to reflect her character." The adult Wendy is described by Morrill as a "perfect mother, warm and nurturing. Unlike Jane, she feels strongly that children should keep their imagination alive. One of my favorite scenes is when the adult Wendy sees Peter again."

As in the original, Peter Pan defines the theme of the film. "He encapsulates the eternal child, all the things we need to keep in our own hearts," said Morrill. "So Peter is very much the heart of the movie." Morrill also found it important to incorporate Jane's father into the film somehow. "We talked about it a lot; it took some finessing. It was a struggle through all the different versions of the film, but it really adds an emotional charge to the story."

Unlike in J.M. Barrie's original, the father figure is not Captain Hook's counterpart. However, there are parallels between Neverland and Jane's home. "Jane has an adorable little brother, Danny, who's about four years old and appears in the beginning and end of the film," said Morrill. "When Jane goes to Neverland, one of the Lost Boys, Tootles, strongly reminds her of Danny. For example, he hangs upside down and sticks his tongue out at her!"

Of the voice-cast, one famil-

iar name to Disney TV fans is Corey Burton, who voiced Toadie and Gruffi Gummi in the later episodes of the '80s show GUMMI BEARS before going on to voice Dale in RESCUE RANGERS and Quint in the LION KING spinoff TIMON AND PUMBAA. Burton has the challenge of playing Hook, following Hans Conried's splendid performance in the 1953 film. "As I understand," said Chase, "Corey was known for doing a great Captain Hook voice. He's one of my favorite characters in the film. He does a phenomenal job of hewing to the emotion and performance that Conried gave."

Hook's sidekick, Smee, voiced in the original by Bill Thompson, is played by Jeff Bennett, whose TV voices include Brooklyn in GARGOYLES, Jitters in BONKERS and Duke L'Orange in MIGHTY DUCKS. Bennett also voices some of the other pirates, but Smee stands out. "Smee is such a funny, bumbling character, and Jeff is terrific in the part," said Chase.

He also praised British teen Harriet Owen, the voice of Jane. "Jane is an emotionally complex role, conveying this girl's difficulties and struggles, and I think children will connect to her." The heroic Peter Pan, originally voiced by child star Bobby Driscoll, is played by Blayne Weaver, one of the voices in the series HOUSE OF MOUSE.

Like the first film, RETURN TO NEVERLAND has relatively few songs for a Disney picture. The opening credits feature a rearranged *Second Star to the Right*, performed in the original film by the Jud Conlon Chorus. The new vocalist is Jonatha Brooke, who also sings an original ballad, *I'll Try*, reflecting Jane's emotional journey. (The strategy of reflecting characters' feelings in background songs was previously used in TARZAN.)

The group They Might Be Giants contribute *So To Be One of Us*, the only song performed by in-film characters as Peter and the Lost Boys bring Jane into the group and welcome her as a Lost Girl. The boy-band BB Mak provides the closing credits number, a remake of *Do You Believe In Magic*.

One inevitable question is whether RETURN TO NEVERLAND will be hampered by HOOK. Stephen Spielberg's 1991 high-profile film sequel to PETER PAN that came afoul of dissatisfied critics and poor box-office. Might its lukewarm performance scupper Disney's film? Chase didn't think so: "I don't see any relationship between RETURN TO NEVERLAND and that film," he said. "Our film lives in the world of Disney animation, and I don't think the audience will make connections to anything else. RETURN TO NEVERLAND is a film with a lot of heart, humor, and fun, and I hope it will connect to people for those reasons."

CFQ

THE LORD OF THE RINGS

The Animated Films

*Peter Jackson Wasn't the First to Take on Tolkien.
How Rankin, Bass, and Bakshi Envisioned Middle-Earth*

By Ross Plesset

Rankin/Bass's *THE HOBBIT* (1977) was a special project for several of the principals. Lester Abrams—an aficionado of the Tolkien original—landed the job of character designer quite early in his career. He did twenty initial character designs, but two years

elapsed before he heard from Rankin/Bass again. During this time—the early '70s—the script was undergoing revisions. The first draft tried to encompass the whole story, but eventually it was pared down. Producer/director/designer Arthur Rankin maintained that audiences' attention spans are especially short for animation.

Upon returning to the project, Abrams finished the characters with Rankin. "Disney was everything to me when I was growing up," Abrams said, "And in college I had fallen in love with [illustrator] Arthur Rackham. I used a lot of Rackham illustrations to find the

PERILS OF AMBITION:
The designs for the Bakshi *LORD OF THE RINGS* looked impressive, but the rotoscoped animation failed to enchant.

faces for the dwarves. In going over them and adapting them for

eyes on it because the Japanese always put big eyes on their lead characters."

A self-portrait of Leonardo da Vinci was the basis for Gandalf, and the voice was provided by director John Huston. "John Huston was very enthusiastic about getting this role," Abrams continued. "He was familiar with Gandalf. Arthur Rankin tried to direct him, and he said, 'No, no, no. That's not how it goes.' He directed himself in the role. Arthur Rankin was delighted that he had this major director directing himself."

animation, I realized I was treading on the same tracks as the Disney animators. I found the sources for *Grumpy*—which I used for *Thorin*—and *Dopey*.

"When I was in my junior year at [Rhode Island School of Design], we had to do a series of pen and inks. My favorite book had been *The Hobbit*, so I did Bilbo sitting in front of the Hobbit hole. I hadn't done pen and ink before, and I had no idea that I was ever going to do anything with it. In the end, that's the face they used.... They put big

Gollum came partially from Abrams's love of Disney. "I liked to draw Donald Duck as a kid. I favored him more than Mickey. When I did the two orbs for the eyes for Gollum, I automatically put the wide, thin mouth beneath him because I had drawn Donald Duck so much." His initial Gollum was a more benign representation. Abrams saw the character more as a degenerate Hobbit than a cannibal, but at Rankin's urging it was made more ferocious and threatening.

Abrams continued, "The goblins and the trolls were all big lugs, and I didn't know how I was going to distinguish them. When I did the goblins, I went to an anatomy that was far away from human so they could look distinct from the other characters. I used frog anatomy there. As a joke, I put Roman centurion costumes on the goblin guards. I thought, *We can't have frogs in Roman centurion costumes*, but it worked!

"For the trolls, we went with John Bauer, a famous Swedish illustrator. I basically worked from his trolls, and then a few



years later they were used for **THE DARK CRYSTAL**.... I intended for them to stay hunched over, the way they do in **THE DARK CRYSTAL**, but the animators lifted them up and they walked upright like big lugs. I was sort of disappointed with that. I did the Elf King on the bus in New York when I was taking some of the work in. There was something familiar about the image, but I didn't know what it was. Years later I realized that it was Yul Brenner from **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**. Yul Brenner was seated on the throne with his legs spread and bare-legged." Abrams was disappointed with Elrond, who he thought resembled Emperor Ming.

Although Romeo Muller wrote the script, Abrams had some influence on it. "Arthur Rankin wanted to eliminate the spiders; he said they didn't advance the story. But I said, 'They are the most distinct visually, because of their shapes.' They weren't just big lugs." In the end, it became a choice between the spiders and Beorn. Beorn was never designed.

Since the late-1950's, animator Ralph Bakshi (**COOL WORLD**) had wanted to adapt *The Lord of the Rings* into an animated movie. On a parallel track, his friend, producer Saul Zaents (**AMADEUS**), was also a Tolkien fan. The pieces came together in the mid-'70s, when Zaents's company acquired the movie rights to the trilogy. The plan was to tell the story in at least two movies.

Medieval scholar Chris Conkling was hired as screenwriter in the spring of 1976. The script's evolution accelerated as Conkling and Bakshi explored ways of dividing the story into multiple movies. "We actually wrote the script about four different ways," recalled Conkling. "We wrote it as three films, and then I cut it in half and then wrote it as two films, and then I tried to squeeze the whole thing into one film, a three-and-half hour epic.... That was before the **STAR WARS** trilogy, so we didn't know how that middle film would work, [not having] a beginning or an end. We thought more of dividing it in half, into two stories,

rather than three."

The filmmakers also experimented with ways of telling the story. Conkling's second draft (September 13, 1976) actually opens in the trilogy's second volume, with Hobbits Merry and Pippin fleeing a battle, entering Fangorn Forest, and encountering Treebeard. They tell Treebeard of their adventures, and this provides the film's narration until the story catches up with them. When the narration ends, the story focuses more on Frodo and Sam.

This draft also featured Farmer Maggot, with his amusing dialogue, and the enigmatic and popular character Tom Bombadil. Much of his poetry, as written by Tolkien, is used, although it is sometimes shortened. Included are his descriptions of himself, much of what relates to the current happenings, and his remembrances of the world's beginning.

Several of Conkling's drafts also featured a map of Middle-Earth. "I always wish there had been some kind of a map in there. I think it was hard for a non-Tolkien person to understand. I put a scene in there where [the fellowship] is looking at a map and saying, 'We could go this way to Mordor or this way to Minas Tirith.'"

Both Conkling and Peter S. Beagle, who eventually condensed Conkling's script and made some changes, took issue with the final ending. Conkling's script ended much further into the second book than does the final movie. "In the scene of the fall of Saruman, I tried to incorporate a little bit of Nixon's resignation speech. He would never admit that he committed any crimes. He just said, 'Gandalf, there were a few mistakes.'" The final scene had Frodo and Sam heading toward Mordor in orc garb. As the camera pulled away from them, Gollum is revealed spying on them.

Beagle, who characterized the finished film as "partial-birth abortion," also claimed

LOST IN TRANSLATION: Lester Abrams designed a less-threatening Gollum for Rankin/Bass's **THE HOBBIT**, but his concept was altered in production.



that his ending was different. "When it was in limited re-

lease at the very beginning, it was significantly different," he recalled. "It didn't look as though it was supposed to be a completed film. When it went into general release, Saul Zaents flipped a couple of reels so that it seemed to be self-contained and end with a glorious triumph. I ended it with Frodo and Sam heading into the mountains where they're going to meet Shelob." Zaents flatly denies that reels were changed.

Part Two of **THE LORD OF THE RINGS**, which would have completed the story, was tentatively planned for release in 1980. Bakshi predicted further animation breakthroughs. Also, "in the second [picture], we'll try to pick up on sequences we missed in the first book," he told Lawrence French. "I'm going to backtrack. Tom Bombadil might make it in the second picture." Zaents expected the follow-up to be easier, because the main characters were already designed and cast.

The second feature, of course, was never made. Beagle recalled there being some kind of parting of ways between Zaents and Bakshi. "It was not a

parting of ways personally," commented Zaents. "We still see each other and have coffee. The parting of the ways was about the picture. I didn't think we made as good a picture as we should have. Animation, in my mind, couldn't make the best movie. We gave it our best shot, and it didn't work."

Despite the movie's unkind reviews, Beagle claimed that in England it has done well on video, and has just been rereleased there in a special set.

Rankin/Bass's follow-up, **THE RETURN OF THE KING**, aired in 1980 and tied up several loose ends from the Ralph Bakshi film. Both Abrams and Arthur Rankin prefer **THE HOBBIT**. Rankin: "It was a big, big challenge to take the material from that book and turn it into an animatable script and an animatable production. We did that only because **THE HOBBIT** was so successful, and very frankly, I think we bit off a little bit more than was necessary. **THE HOBBIT**, in my view, is a superior film and deserves the Peabody Award, the Christopher Award, and everything it got. **RETURN OF THE KING** was just a lot of stuff to handle. The look of it is good."

CFQ

The Lost Effects of *jay and silent bob* **STRIKE BACK**

Nervous Lawyers Meant Scooby *Didn't Get His Snack*

By Patrick Legare

It's been said that for many films, the best moments are often the ones that never make it onto the screen. When that statement is made about a Kevin Smith film, you know that whatever is missing is probably something very twisted...and very funny. In Smith's latest work, JAY AND SILENT BOB STRIKE BACK, legal issues forced a lengthy Scooby-Doo salute to be trimmed down significantly before it could even be filmed. Sadly, what was lost was a prominent piece of

work done by special makeup effects supervisor Vincent Guastini.

For a special-effects artist, there is no worse news than hearing that a sequence you've spent countless hours working on has to be cut. Guastini's experience on JAY AND SILENT BOB required him to create an animatronic Scooby-Doo to be used in a comical, Smith-inspired homage to the classic cartoon. The dog was built, but once the lawyers got wind of the sequence, it was not long before the scripted scenes were pared down.

Though Guastini is not bitter about the experience and loves working with Kevin Smith and co-producer Scott Moser, it was certainly disappointing to see his latest animatronic creation never make it to the big screen in what probably would have been the film's sickest gag.

"It was a hysterical sequence that Kevin came up with," Guastini recalled. According to the effects artist, the original script called for Jay and Silent Bob to meet up with the Scooby-Doo gang. In this live-action rendition, though, the gang is some-

what less interested in solving mysteries. "They're all on pot, and the girls are real loose and trying to get laid," Guastini laughed. "They're basically all fucked up!"

After firing up a bong, a dream sequence found Jay and Bob being chased by Scooby, whose inhalation of smoke gave him a tremendous erection. "Jay pisses the dog off," Guastini continued. "It attacks him, jumps on the van and starts humping the windshield trying to get at Jay while the van is driving."

The scene's climax, in all senses of the term, would have probably made cult film history if it had ever been filmed. Sadly (or not, depending on your point of view), viewers will never witness an animatronic Scooby unleashing his seed all over the Mystery Machine's windshield. Even though the scene, in all of its fecund glory, was never filmed, Guastini remains proud of his mechanical mutt. "It did everything," he said. "We had full lip sync; it could pronounce words. The tongue had full function—it could actually come out of its mouth and lick its nose. Its eyes bulged, because in one of the shots where it's humping, we wanted the eyes to bulge."

Understanding that the

ONE WIRED MUTT: Animatronics designer Hal Miles readies Scooby-Doo for the star turn that would never come.



excising of this show-stopper was a big loss to Guastini, director Smith called on the effects man to use the talking dog in one quick sequence to close the scene. "They gave me that shot and I had one day to do it," Guastini said. "We rehearsed it over and over, and it performed beautifully. When the cameras rolled, it still (worked fine) and we got one or two takes, but on the third take, all of a sudden the head started smoking!"

The Scooby sequence, despite the adversity involved, remained Guastini's lone disappointment on the film. His most prominent work in the final cut is a PLANET OF THE APES homage. With 20th Century Fox and Miramax checking in to make sure

Guastini's APES makeup didn't look too much like either the Tim Burton-directed APES remake or the 1968 original, Vincent decided to give his simians a heavy metal look. "It's more like a fantasy-type thing," he explains. "Like something that would be in *Heavy Metal* magazine."

Another great effect Guastini worked on was Mark Hamill's character Cockknocker, a bad guy who wages a light-saber battle with Jay and Bob, using nothing more than his giant fist. Guastini created the giant hand that Hamill used to punch his enemies in their private parts. "Mark Hamill was just terrific," Guastini recalled. "His character is so beautifully over the top that everybody is going to be rolling in the aisles."

Guastini's other makeup effects on the film included an orangutan suit made to double for Jay and Bob's orangutan sidekick, Tango, and a set of braces for AMERICAN PIE star Seann William Scott. "He requested big braces," Guastini said. "Jay and Bob are in the Scooby-Doo van, hanging out.



LET SLEEPING DOGS LAY: Vincent Guastini's animatronic Scooby-Doo (seen in camera-ready form, above, and partially completed, below) was built to perform a number of amusing, and a few revolting, functions, but in the end only got a few seconds of screen-time.

There's this real nerdy guy (Scott) who comes in, and he's the one that all the

girls love!"

On the other side of the special effects coin, Joseph Grossberg's CGI work received a great deal of on-screen time. With more than 220 effects shots in the movie, the visual effects supervisor, who formerly worked for Charles Band's Full Moon Productions, certainly had his hands full. "It was a lot more than we thought," Grossberg said.

When he was initially approached by producer Scott Mosier to work on JAY AND SILENT BOB, Grossberg figured there would be approximately thirty visual effects shots in the film.

"By the time we started shooting, we thought there would be about sixty to a hundred shots," Grossberg says. "But certain sequences in the movie really grew."

One example is the light-saber battle at the film's climax in

which Jay and Bob (as their comic book counterparts Bluntman and Chronic) fight Cockknocker. "That sequence was roughly a page and a half in the script," Grossberg revealed. "Bob Weinstein's whole thing was, 'You've got to STAR WARS it up,' so almost half of the movie's visual effects are in that one sequence...it became a big 3D animation sequence."

Grossberg admits that while Kevin Smith had not worked with computer effects much in his previous films, it didn't take him long to warm to the idea. Sequences he handled with CGI

included a CHARLIE'S ANGELS spoof, a scene in which Jay talks to his angelic side and his devilish side, *a la* ANIMAL HOUSE, and, funniest of all, a talking baby scene that was done to show Jay and Bob in their early days.

"You actually see the origin of Jay and Bob," said Grossberg. "The origins take place of course in the 1970s, in front of the Quickie Mart. We digitized the entire scene, and we colorized it to make it look like a super-saturated, '70s look. It definitely makes the sequence stand out."

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Bones

The Ghoul's in the Hood When Snoop Dogg and Ernest Dickerson Go Supernatural

By Bryan Cairns

Welcome to Chicago, 1979, where gangster Jimmy Bones (Snoop Doggy Dogg) is the charismatic protector of his thriving neighborhood. Cool, suave, and slick, he's got all the respect, although he's no poster boy for law enforcement. But when some neighborhood-level entrepreneurs, including his best friend Jeremiah, introduce crack into the area, Bones is less than receptive. With

drugs such a lucrative business, though, those with a vested interest in market expansion come up with a simple solution rather than kiss their newfound gold mine goodbye: BANG! Jimmy becomes just so many bones.

Cut to the present, where the neighborhood has dissolved into a ghetto wasteland, and a group of unsuspecting teens are about to release Bones's very pissed-off spirit. Shot in Vancouver for \$14 million, with the province's usual dismal weather only heightening the eerie atmosphere, New Line Cinema's BONES is a unique meeting of cinematic scares and urban grit. "Really, what we discover is Bones never left," explained director Ernest R. Dickerson. "His spirit is trapped in the structure of a house. Pam Grier plays Pearl, his ladylove from the past who witnessed his death. We find out that a lot of things in this movie occur for a reason: The house is bought by some kids, and it turns out to all be part of Bones's plan to come back. I don't want to say too much without ruining it, because there are connections. It does deal with how the sins of the parents are revisited upon their children."

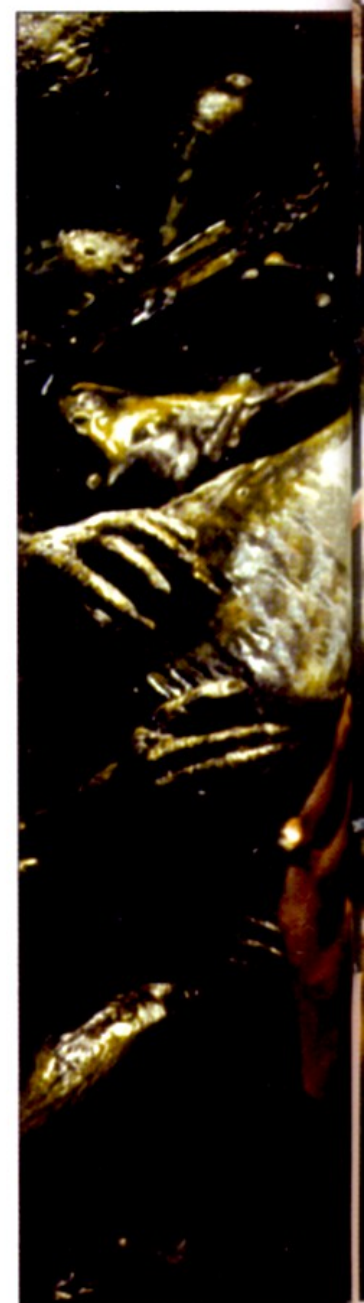
Bones gets his chance for pay-back after a group of teens decide to convert a rundown house into a nightclub. Unbeknownst to his father, Patrick purchases the building where Bones was murdered and where his restless spirit still dwells inside, screaming for vengeance. Even though his supernatural abilities are dimmer than a ten watt light bulb, Bones can still influence weaker minds, as he does with Patrick. On the bright side, to go on a bloody rampage, our resident frightener must still escape his

mortar prison and reclaim a physical body. Unfortunately for everyone, he's slowly accomplishing both.

"I always try and ground these things in a sense of real magic," revealed Adam Simon (CARNOSAUR, AMERICAN NIGHTMARE), who co-wrote the movie along with Tim Metcalfe (KALIFORNIA, FRIGHT NIGHT 2). "It doesn't have to be true, it just has to be something that somebody believed in."

Even though Snoop acted as a template for the lead, it was his agent who was instrumental in the flick's take-off, believing that a collaborative effort between the musician and mutual clients Simon and Metcalfe would be a blast. After a few phone conversations about characters and plot, the two writers developed a story that Snoop loved. On the strength of the initial pitch alone, New Line snatched the project up on the spot.

Simon claimed that BONES was the smoothest film process he's ever been involved in. "I was particularly inspired by the trends of the south side of Chicago, where I grew up and where the story was originally set," he revealed. "My own childhood consisted of being afraid of ghosts, vampires, and werewolves, but at the same time being surrounded by a frightening urban world. In a way, what I always wanted—and I don't know if BONES is the ultimate



successful version, but it's a good first attempt—is to marry true urban reality with classic supernatural horror.”

Dickerson deserved kudos in this department as well. “It does deal with the destruction of a neighborhood,” the director said. “A lot of my films have also dealt with heroes coming out of unlikely places, and what exactly a hero is. In many ways, *Bones* is a tragic hero.”

To make matters worse, the house is already a real estate nightmare. It simultaneously exists on two planes between the living world and the world of the dead, better known as the necropolis. Despite its normal facade, the walls are actually built out of hideously deformed and tormented bodies, which are seemingly alive. It is within this supernatural nexus that Bones plans his big comeback. “Before he resurrects, Bones is really a living shadow: in the walls, in the texture of the paint, even the cracks,” said Dickerson. “It’s very subtle. Until they bring his body back, he’s really two-dimensional. He’s trapped inside the structure with limited capabilities to affect anything in our world, but he has other ways.”

In an age of psychotic serial killers, *BONES*’s creative team aimed to bring back supernatural horror with a contempo-

count themselves lucky. Former enemies and their kin are either dragged into the hellish necropolis for eternity, or have their decapitated heads serve as containers for their souls

While Mr. Bones is busy quenching his thirst for retribution, it’s easy to forget the film’s underlying romantic element: At one point in the movie, a face-off is destined for former lovers Pearl (Pam Grier) and Bones. But will there be any leeway within Bones’s hate for his lost love? Does Pearl even care? “It’s that divided feeling because you miss them so much,” Dickerson admitted. “You find out this was the only man in her life



RETRO VENGEANCE: Original gangsta Jimmy Bones (Snoop Dogg, left) attempts to settle some scores from beyond the grave, but can he be redeemed by former love Pearl (Pam Grier, above)? **FAR LEFT:** Director Ernest Dickerson.

back, how would you feel?”

Customary with this genre is a required level of gore. Dickerson said

BONES would deliver the goods, even laughing about a squirm-inducing maggot scene. Yet these days, such thrills are less-than-thrilling for a film board that could request more slices, chops, and cuts than a *FRIDAY THE 13TH* marathon. Thankfully, *BONES* only received the board’s wrath in one instance, where blood gushed from a slashed throat.

New Line and Simon are hoping *BONES* makes enough box-office noise to develop into a franchise. A lot of the weight for the film’s success falls on Snoop’s scare tactics. The Grammy-nominated rapper has stuck mainly to light popcorn roles, playing a shadow of himself. Now Hollywood wants to know if he can carry a motion picture by putting some bite into Bones.

At least in Simon’s mind, there is no doubt. “Snoop is terrific, and people are going to love seeing him as Bones. If any of us have any regrets about this movie, it’s that somehow he isn’t on the screen every second. He’s cool, scary, and has a great presence.”

Beware the Dogg.

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rary ghost story. The first half of the movie plays out like a haunted house romp, complete with all the boo fixings. Of course, Bones eventually regains his shape and substance, and that’s when the death toll starts climbing. Those who die quickly can

who had a deep love for Pearl. Two decades later, he returns, and she’s frightened because she doesn’t know what’s really come back. Pam and I spent time talking about this. If someone you loved dearly died and you had the chance to have them

CFQ Reviews

That's 26 Ghosts Altogether

By Dennis Kleinman

Okay, you're at a party and someone is describing a movie: "So then the guy takes the chain saw and lops her head clean off, and the head starts rolling around on the floor like it's alive or something, spewing blood all over. Then this wicked-looking snake crawls out of the head and rips the face off the guy with the chain saw." After you and the others listening let out the mandatory, "Eeeeeewww," he finishes his review with, "IT ROCKED!"

Considering how many horror movies have been produced over

the past century, and how much money they've made, it may seem a bit late in the game to ask why people pay good money to be scared? An alien visiting our planet would probably think we are, as a species, highly illogical. If he were a movie alien, he would be thinking this while sucking our brains out through the top of our skulls.

The question of why people like to be scared seems particularly mordant at a time when there is so much scary stuff in the real world to deal with. One would think if one were an alien—brain-sucking or otherwise—that humans would be going to the movies to seek respite from their

fears; take in a light comedy, or perhaps a cozy little family drama that reaffirms the strength of American values and institutions.

Which proves something that I've theorized for years: When it comes to the preferences of the movie-going public, aliens don't know squat. Two flicks that are packing them in, at least at the time of this writing, are FROM HELL, another in the seemingly endless string of Jack the Ripper retreads, and 13 GHOSTS, another in the rather short string of 13 GHOSTS retreads.

Those of us old enough to be called, endlessly, by the media "aging baby-boomers"—there's an oxymoron in there somewhere—

will recall that 13 GHOSTS first graced America's screens way back in 1960. At the time, it was considered state-of-the-art horror, hands-down the *scariest movie ever made*. A number of persons I've discussed it with recently have told me how terrified they were by it; one woman said that she was so traumatized, she didn't sleep for months after a single viewing.

But 13 GHOSTS was more than just a horror movie. It was a *William Castle* horror movie. Castle specialized in movies with gimmicks. For *THE TINGLER*, he had theater seats wired with industrial-strength joy-buzzers. With 13 GHOSTS, it was special glasses that one could don in order to see the ghosts, which would otherwise remain invisible. Why anyone would want them to remain invisible is one of those mysteries visiting aliens are still mulling over after all these years.

I was of course too terrified to see it, with or without the glasses. According to my mother, I hid under my bed for three weeks after just seeing the commercial for *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED*. But in order to get a perspective on the new version of 13 GHOSTS, I swallowed my childhood fears and

13 Ghosts

Warner Bros., 2001. Starring: F. Murray Abraham, Tony Shalhoub, Shannon Elizabeth. Directed by Steve Beck. Screenplay by Neil Stevens and Richard D'Ovidio. Story by Robb White.

rented a copy of the original from my local video store. I saw this as a unique opportunity to see just how far the state-of-the-art of horror had progressed in the last forty years, which might in turn shed some light on my original question of why Americans like being scared so much, which in turn would prove that some of us aging baby-boomers still have something important to contribute to society, besides support for the vitamin supplement industry.

As one might expect, the original 13 GHOSTS isn't as scary now as it must have seemed back in the day. In fact, it is hard to see how anyone could have gotten so worked up over it. The ghosts are cheesy, super-imposed images that have no palpable reality whatsoever. Objects float through the air, pulled along by strings so obvious that the effect wouldn't have made the cut in a *Three Stooges* short. There is an awful lot of screaming going on, but nothing much really to scream at.

Probably the most disorienting thing about the original 13 GHOSTS is the buoyant complacency of the family, led by a totally feckless father (Donald Woods). Because Papa is such a poor provider, all of the family's furniture has been repossessed, which prompts his son (George Herbert) to use his one birthday wish to ask for a house full of furniture. In the grand tradition of movie birthday wishes, the family soon inherits a house that comes completely furnished and fully ghosted. But this family is so comfy, complacent, and secure, that even after they realize that there are nasty, possibly homicidal spirits floating about, they remain in the house night after night. ("Hi, honey. I'm home. Anybody get killed by a ghost today?")

Despite general innocuousness, some of the scenes actually provide a bit of a jolt. One in particular, where Daddy is attacked and branded by a kind of flaming pinwheel, has a surreal force to it that transcends the other mediocre goings on. That many of the scarier things happen to the head of this erstwhile sit-com family must have seemed particularly unsettling at a time when Daddy was



13 Ghosts

CFQ *Reviews*

considered the bedrock of American family life.

Another '50s American icon that takes a drubbing, and in this aspect *13 GHOSTS* is way ahead of the curve, is that it makes the young, handsome lawyer the villain. At a time when Perry Mason was canonizing the American legal system, *13 GHOSTS* gives us Perry's evil twin: a guy who, in the grand tradition of Scooby-Doo, dresses up as a ghost to scare the family off, leaving him with the treasure that is hidden in the house.

But, these mild subversions aside, the reason people went to *13 GHOSTS* back in 1960 was the same reason people are queuing up now—to get the bejeezus scared out of them at least thirteen times. But be warned: The 2001 model ain't your daddy's haunted house movie. In every conceivable way, the new *13 GHOSTS* is bigger, smarter, and scarier. It also contains a level of graphic brutality that probably would have caused massive seizures in audiences forty years ago.

One of the key differences is in the family itself. The new family is also suffering from a housing shortage. But this time, the family's dire straits aren't the fault of Arthur, the family breadwinner—played by Tony Shaloub—who embodies the same volatile mixture of sincerity, caustic humor, and barely containable rage that Alan Arkin once brought to the screen. This time around, the house and all the family's possessions are destroyed in a fire that also takes the life of the wife he loved so dearly. Now, Arthur is stuck in a small apartment with his spoiled daughter (Shannon Elizabeth) and young son (Alec Roberts), one of the least appealing celluloid children I've seen recently. In this way, he is almost a match for the young son in the original who, not to be unkind, is one of the scarier things in the film.

They of course, inherit a house. But unlike the quaint Gothic manor of the original, this one is a sleek, modernist nightmare—all glass and chrome with strange writings etched into it in Latin. (Why is it that all ghosts are lapsed Catholics?) And the man they've inherited it from isn't the scientist-in-quest-of-knowledge Dr. Zorba of the original. He's a *villain*, played with grand, leering panache

by F. Murray Abraham. You almost expect him to uncork a big, fat, "Bwah-ha-ha" at some points.

It isn't long before the family comes to the realization that the house is actually "...a machine designed by the devil and powered by the dead..." that the Abraham character is going to use to open some space-time portal unto Hell, or whatever. Compare this to the simple revenge plot that lies at the heart of the original movie.

By the time the characters discover this, of course, all the glass panels have slammed shut, and they are trapped inside, turning it into just one more "haunted house with thirteen gorillas" flick. Actually, the movie it resembles most is the recent *HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL*, a remake of another William Castle movie. Both movies are co-produced by the Dark Castle production house, whose sole reason for existing is to reinvent Mr. Castle's movies for modern audiences. I hear their next project is a remake of Castle's *THE GUN THAT WON THE WEST*, in which a prairie family is trapped in a creepy, old teepee that is haunted by Native American ghosts, and....

Okay, so the characters are different, the story is different. What about the ghosts? The ghosts are *very* different, and herein lies the main point of sociological discussion. In the original, the ghosts fit rather neatly within societal norms, for ghosts anyway. A number of them were even defined by their occupation: a headless lion tamer who has lost his noggin in a lion's mouth; a chef who killed his wife with a cleaver. In the end, they turned out to be quite benign, wanting only to avenge the death of their friend, Dr. Zorba. These are conformist ghosts, ghosts who fit in, ghosts you can live with.

Not so the ghosts in the updated version, unless of course you happen to own a professional wrestling franchise in Hell. The current line-up includes the Juggernaut, the Jackal, the Torso, the Hammer, and other beasties from the dark side of a Marilyn Manson video. Rigorously conceived, each with a compelling visual hook—the Jackal bears a small cage around his head, a kind of portable fetish prop—these creatures are



13 Ghosts

the spawn of the *HELLRAISER* series, in which each cenobite had a repulsive visual calling card.

In the 1960 film, the ghosts are seen and heard more than they are felt. The line between the ghost world and the real one was fairly well-defined, and the ghosts confined themselves to moving objects around while a theramin throbbed in the background. In 2001, the ghosts like to get physical, so much so that, except for the fact that they appear and disappear in a disconcerting manner, they are hardly ghosts at all. Michael Meyers and Jason wouldn't be out of place in this crowd, although the carnage might be a little too intense for them.

In this movie, human bodies are treated like vegetables. They are crushed, diced, broken in half, split lengthwise down the middle. One almost expects Emeril to pop up and tell us what to do with the bodies once they have been properly pureed.

Knowing that Joel Silver, that master of movie mayhem, was one of the producers certainly explains some of this emphasis on physical violence. It also explains how all those trucks and explosions got in there, not to mention the large number of corpses. In the original, only one person is killed: the guy responsible for the murder of Dr. Zorba. In the remake, I stopped keeping track when the body count hit double digits.

But it still doesn't answer the original question: Why do people crave this kind of entertainment?

Perhaps a look further back into history would help. During the time of the Black Plague, there was an obsession with death in its most tangible forms. Paintings and sculptures dwelt on the tiniest details of deterioration and putrefaction. Plays and other diversion had Death as a leading character, dominating all the other players.

It would appear that in times of stress—and what times aren't—the imagination has a need to get ahead of the fear curve, to work through anxiety by fantasizing it in its most vivid, worst-case-scenario terms, then confronting it in all its horrifying glory. Once the mind has determined that it has "seen" the worst and survived, it can relax, confident that it is ready for whatever comes.

What stands between the new and the old version of *13 GHOSTS* is forty years, years that saw revelations about the extent of the Holocaust, the intensification of the Cold War, the delivery of Viet Nam to our living rooms, the globalization of terrorism, the invocation of the drug epidemic, the onslaught of AIDS. Each contributed to a growing sense of personal insecurity, and an awareness that, even in America, death rules. As our fears grew, so did our imaginations' need to delve further and further into the maw of horror to calm those fears, something that the movies are particularly good at.

That, I believe, is why fear sells and will continue to sell during these truly horrifying times. Aliens take note.

CFQ

CFQ *Reviews*

Quest for the Story Ark

By Todd French

SPRIGGAN, the title of ADV Film Release's latest anime find, refers to a cadre of elite and near-superhuman secret agents defending the world from the activation of an apocalypse-triggering alien relic. An equally appropriate alternate title for the '98 Toho release might very well be BOOM! Things blow up reaaaal good in SPRIGGAN.

A deliriously kick-butt anime bully of a movie, SPRIGGAN manages, in its relatively slim running time of ninety minutes, to display more kineticism and story-telling pizzazz than ninety percent of the prepackaged live-action pap that passes these days as popular cinema fare. If cinefantastique fans feel starved for genre kicks after the various disappointments of such summer blockbusters as JURASSIC PARK III, TOMB RAIDER, and PLANET OF THE APES, they would be well-advised to give SPRIGGAN its due. Nigh-faultlessly helmed by Hirotugu Kawasaki (chief animator for AKIRA and GHOST IN THE SHELL), with strong echoes of mentor Katsuhiro Otomo's oeuvre, SPRIGGAN remains a memorably combustible and *fun* cel-cocktail. They don't get much better.

Occidental anime fans and action buffs are sure to have fun picking out the movie's live-action/anime antecedents as the film's non-stop narrative blasts by like a full-throttle Walt Disney/Tsui Hark extravaganza. The enjoyably loopy script-quilt of James Bondian superhuman heroics, impending apocalypse, extraterrestrial relics, government chicanery, and deadly mutant cyborgs is like a palimpsest of generic favorites, incorporating such western mainstays as RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK (Noah's Ark is the prize here), THE MATRIX, INDEPENDENCE DAY, DIE HARD, 2001, BLADE RUNNER, STAR WARS, and the oh-so-unbearable TOMB RAIDER into its scenario. Anime nods to AKIRA (with more Otomoesque nasty kiddie psionics), LAPUTA, BUBBLEGUM CRISIS, and NADIA also abound. Nonetheless, there's plenty of strikingly *original* visionary élan in evidence. While the film may be a little shy on character flesh and blood, it's still a ripping ride and

will not disappoint on either shore.

In ultra-rev mode from the get-go, the film wastes no time in setting things up for the viewer. When ARCAM, a super-secret historical force of guardians, conducts an investigation on the slopes of Mt. Ararat in Turkey, the team is wiped out by the discovery that Noah's Ark is, in actuality, a long-dormant alien vessel with awesome, albeit unknown powers. Ace teen ARCAM agent, Yu Ominae is swept into the deadly action when classmate Tanaka tries to kill him with a plastic explosive. The impulsive agent's alarm increases when he finds the message, "Noah will be your grave," scrawled in blood on Tanaka's body and learns via a superior that similar messages have been painted on the bodies of Yu's friends.

Determined to get to the root of the mystery and find out who has been massacring ARCAM teams around the world, Yu takes off for Turkey, pursued by a cadre of lethal cyborg agents from the Machine Corps, a rogue division of the Department of Defense which seeks world-domination through possession of Noah. Complicating matters is the fact that his old enemy and former comrade-in-arms Fattmann is one of the leaders of the extermination squad. Further complicating things, one of the Machine Corps master-minds, the awesomely powerful child psionist Colonel McDougall, has gone mad and intends to use Noah to remake the world in his image. With only the assistance of French SPRIGGAN Jean Mondo and ARCAM scientist Dr. Meisel, Yu races against time to thwart the nefarious schemes of TMC operatives and insure the planet's survival.

All the gorgeous blood-and-thunder aside, SPRIGGAN may boast the singular distinction of being the first anime movie ever to be inspired by Judeo-Christian mythology (however, the "Red Noah" spaceship and "Tower of Babel" weapon of NADIA, not to mention the Kabala-inspired adversaries of NEON GENESIS EVANGELION, could also claim dibs in the minds of the anime-informed). The ground-zero aesthetics and non-stop action will keep the attention of most viewers, but SPRIGGAN will be a feast for Otomo enthusiasts and cyber-cel buffs, who will get off on picking

up the many references to other films. The concept of child soldiers engineered by the Pentagon (Yu is #42), is a direct nod to AKIRA, as is the megalomaniacal child psionic McDougall, with his telekinetic powers and fits of near mind-blowing psychic detonation—the result of the magnetic force amplifier in his brain. When he starts gunning up for his battle with Yu in the confines of Noah, his brain cables swirl like tentacles; as he fuses with his environment, he starts to resemble AKIRA's loose-cannon psychokinetic, Tetsuo. The scenes of frozen dinos inside Noah are also very reminiscent of scenes from NADIA: SECRET OF BLUE WATER. The nods to past anime features aside, cinefantastique fans will probably get enough of a kick out of the movie's sheer beauty, plus its numbing display of firepower. The

Spriggan (Supurigan)

ADV, 1998. Voice talent: Chris Patton, Kevin Conn, Ted Pfister, Andy McAvin, Kelly Manison, Mike Kleinhenz, Spike Spencer, John Paul Shephard, John Swasey. Directed by Hirotugu Kawasaki. Written by Yasutaka Ito, Hirotugu Kawasaki. Based on works by Hiroshi Takashige. General Supervisor/Producer: Katsuhiro Otomo. Composer: Kuniaki Haishima.

alien vessel itself, resembling a huge fish with arcane symbols carved into it, is a visually arresting concept, and the bio-mecha villain gallery, with Little Boy and the Fellini-esque Fattmann as the stand-outs, are nastily creepy creations.

In terms of character (with the exception of Yu) and nuance, SPRIGGAN is fairly lightweight compared to Otomo's metaphysically richer past works, but Kawasaki's futuro-INDIANA JONES is so relentlessly propulsive, and the battle/action scenes



Spriggan

CFQ *Reviews*

so fast and fluid, that you don't have time to question the bumps on the ride. To be sure, SPRIGGAN, like AKIRA, is filled with slick blood and gore (the cackling Little Boy, with his Freddy Kruegeresque wire-cutter claw attachments, is a grisly piece of work), but the mayhem flits by so fast en route to the next action set-piece that it never becomes gratuitous. The plot, for the most part, consists of hair-breadth escapes and derring-do, sandwiched between pitched battles between the cyborgs and ARCAM factions, with the non-robos generally getting splattered. While the quality of the cel-work may not be on the same par as AKIRA or GHOST IN THE SHELL, it is certainly high-quality and well-textured, with fine movement. And the editing is stellar—this is the kind of movie where a scrap of dialogue in a stat-

ic office scene is punctuated by a flashback shot to a commando's knife impaling a snake to the jungle floor. The movie does pause sufficiently to showcase a single image here and there of majestic dread: the creepy kiddie psionic untouched in his force-bubble in the midst of a raging blizzard; a cyborg's brain-cap of cables floating around his head like medusa snakes. There's even the odd, amusing in-joke: a RAIDERS-like chase through a Turkish mall ends with our hero dismissing a lone swordsman.

All technical, dubbing, and English as-



sists are high-quality—Matt Greenfield and ADV deserve kudos for all the hard work. Where the film flags a little is the reliance on excruciating ordnance to cover the lack of human element. While the Japanese themes of Power vs. Moral Responsibility—from GODZILLA to FIST OF THE NORTH STAR on down to LAPUTA—are certainly in the fore, there's more than a little *déjà vu* here. There's also a ton of overly busy narrative (SPRIGGAN has enough plot for two or three films), especially in the film's last third, as events build towards the apocalyptic conclusion. Flashbacks zoom by as we learn the truth of Yu's origins and the cause of the deadly enmity between himself and the scary Fattmann. McDougall's rants, while they are punctuated by lots of nifty pyrotechnics, do go on a tad too long—a little judicious editing

might have easily gotten the point across and avoided some excessive didacticism. After a few minutes of McDougall going on about his plan for Noah's Ark, one wouldn't be faulted for hoping Yu would hurry up and fire a rocket-launcher at the guy.

One thing in the film-dramaturgy favor is the fact that Yu jumps into action sans cute, cuddly sidekick, and he doesn't have time to get into an amorous clutch with scientist Margaret. The flashbacks amid the fights and flying debris are a ringer for AKIRA's sturm-und-drang finale, and I found it hard to absorb all Yu's background, even as he and McDougall go about their *mano a mano* struggle. Still, despite the sometimes familiar actioneer plot and echoes of Superior Products Past, SPRIGGAN is tour-de-force, high-energy storytelling, and definitely for anime fans who love their sci-fi coming at them at warp-factor-five.

Really, this thing rocks. CFQ

CFQ Reviews

FILM RATINGS

- Must see
- Excellent
- Good
- Mediocre
- Read a Book

MIND MELD

Director: Peter Jayson, williamshatner.com, 2001. With: Leonard Nimoy, William Shatner, Billy West. 75 mins.

For die-hard TREK fans only. William Shatner and Leonard Nimoy sit around and reminisce about old times—both the high and low points—as cameras capture the interplay. On the plus side, the dialogue is lighter on the mutual back-rubbing than one would expect, and actually provides a bit of insight—not all of it pre-rehearsed—into the two men, how they treat their careers and their stardom. Shatner turns out to be a better interviewer than James Lipton will ever be—he even dares to challenge Nimoy on some points—and the two are relaxed enough around each other that the viewer gets the sense that the exercise isn't solely a bald-faced attempt to shake the faithful down for a few more dollars.

To the minus, a fair bulk of the

Correction

Our article on *Kubrick's AI* (33:5:54) mistakenly stated that Chris Cunningham works under a stage name. It is, in fact, his birth name.

show is devoted to going over the rough stretches of both actors' lives. It isn't that we begrudge either men their triumphs—which include legitimate victories over alcoholism, smoking, and the tragic loss of loved ones—but as critically vital as these events may have been to those involved, they play as so much E! TRUE HOLLYWOOD STORY to the viewer whose main interest is in learning about what went on behind the scenes of classic TREK.

MIND MELD's true value comes from watching Shatner be Shatner (his take on the fabled TREK jealousies is, shall we say, characteristic) and in seeing both men relax enough to good-naturedly rag on each other. It's in these candid moments that MELD fulfills its promise, bringing us closer to these two icons.

●● Dan Persons

CFQ Mail

The Once and Future CFQ

I wanted to take a few minutes to express my thoughts on the evolution of CFQ.

I started reading CFQ back in 1976 and I haven't missed an issue yet, but it's been a bumpy road; I feel the magazine has never been better than when it was "the review of SF, horror and fantasy in cinema," and it's all been downhill since. I remember those early issues in the '70s—the Ray Harryhausen, LOGAN'S RUN and WICKER MAN covers—and I consider them the finest in genre journalism ever. The text was so dense, and the sheer amount of films and television shows so comprehensive, that it took me days to devour it all, instead of hours like it does now. That was when a wretched TV vehicle like the LOGAN'S RUN spinoff garnered a two page spread that addressed the failure of SF on TV in general and of LR in particular. Sure, the films were better then than they are now, but this was thoughtful, serious criticism.

CFQ now is a slick, colorful shadow of its former self. The reviews are few and far between. Where they should make up the bulk of the magazine, they have been dropped in favor of "previews" of films that have already been out and seen by the time the issue hits the stands. The articles seem no different than those that appear in *Starlog* or *Cinescape*. Serious criticism can and should be enjoyed *after* a film has been released, so your choice to go for "timely" previews seems like a mistake to me.

To be fair, the magazine has been sliding down this route for more than a decade, while Frederick S. Clarke was still at the helm. CFQ is homogenized now—it is pretty pictures and nice design, with minimal reviews that seem to be treated like token efforts. It's not a bad magazine by any means, but it isn't *special* either, and that's a shame, because it used to be. I really wish that you would take a look at what this magazine used to be, and—while taking into consideration whatever the current market demands—take a step to regain some of that integrity.

I hope that you take these comments as heartfelt; they were not intended to be hostile in any way.

Greg Lamberson
glamberson@nyc.rr.com

[The matter of how to utilize the limited space we have is one we confront with every issue. As you note, CFQ has had to change with the times—one of the reasons why those early issues could devote so many pages to the classics of genre filmmaking was that there was a dearth of new genre material coming out. STAR WARS remedied that situation forever, and now we must choose between covering all the new releases that come out in any two-month span, and upholding CFQ's mission to honor all that is great in genre filmmaking, future, present, and past.

We're still working on the mix. But we will always cover our subjects with a seriousness and respect you'll find nowhere else. —ed.]

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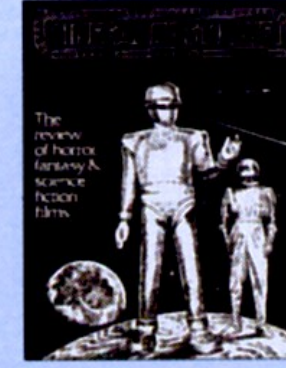
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